TABLE TALKS

AND REFLECTIONS

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MY UNCLE TOBY:

HIS

TABLE-TALKS AND REFLECTIONS.

By AN ATTORNEY-AT-LAW.

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PREFACE.

WHAT kind of a reproof Uncle Toby will administer to the writer, when he shall discover that his quiet, unobtrusive utterances in the sacred precincts of the family circle have been sent to the press without his authority, expressed or implied, I hardly know; although I am well aware that he is incapable of any thing very severe. In self-defense, I might appeal to his vanity, were it not that this quality has been wholly left out of his mental composition. Yet if I can be authorized by the favor of the public to announce to him, erelong, that the work circulates well, and is doing good, he will readily

forgive the rather violent shock to his modesty caused by its sudden appearance. I knew he would not consent to the publication, if asked beforehand; and so it was a matter of necessity to postpone asking his permission until after the thing had been done irrevocably.

An announcement from the publishers greatly surprised me, however; namely, that I had copied so many of his utterances that not the half of them could be used, at present, without swelling the volume into too great a bulk. So it became quite necessary to eliminate a large number from the mass of materials furnished for the work.

It is earnestly hoped that the sentiments herein contained may be more acceptable to the generality of readers than a mere didactic treatise is likely to be. We more clearly discern and more readily apply what comes to us in a personal form, so to speak, than what we meet in an abstract disquisition. The incidents of person, time, and place have a wonderful effect in vivifying the principles of moral conduct. And so much is this the case that I am inclined to

think the *personal narratives* of our Lord by the four evangelists have done vastly more than all the subsequent *epistles* to the Churches in molding the characters of men. "Heart speaks to heart" in this manner.

To grow old gracefully is a rare, yet altogether attainable, accomplishment. To do so requires an assiduous cultivation, through life, of the virtues of the heart, so that business shall not be allowed to incrust or petrify the sensibilities of the moral nature. One design of this work is to endeavor to depict a graceful, genial, lovable old age, in the person of Uncle Toby; and if this is in any wise fulfilled, the labor of preparing it will not have been bestowed in vain.

It is now committed to the favorable consideration of the public; and the blessing of God is implored upon it.

J. C. WELLS.

OTTAWA, ILL., *May*, 1875.

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MY UNCLE TOBY'S TABLE-TALKS.

I.

ABOUT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.

"DISGUSTING!" exclaimed my Uncle Toby, as he contemptuously flung upon the floor the morning paper which, according to his custom, he had been reading at the breakfast table. "Disgusting!" he repeated.

"What is the matter, Uncle Toby?" cried out three or four of us at once, surprised by the sudden and violent sally of the venerable gentleman.

Before I tell you what his answer was, I must explain to you that Uncle Toby is quite an entertaining, every-day philosopher; and loves to descant upon men and things, at the close of the

meal, in an easy, dignified manner, meanwhile balancing his teaspoon upon the edge of the empty cup before him. In general, he is exceedingly good-natured, and delivers his utterances with the solemnity and majesty of an oracle; as is his right by virtue of his earnestness and honesty. But sometimes, in his virtuous indignation against wrong-doing, he becomes quick, sharp, and petulant, as in the present instance.

He appeared somewhat startled by our explosive inquiry; and then responded, "I believe I 'm in favor of a monarchy here!"

"Well, I think that is indeed rather disgusting in a respectable, gray-haired, native-American citizen, like yourself," I ventured slily to remark.

Uncle Toby looked at me over the top of his spectacles as gravely as an owl, and in as withering a way as possible for him, until satisfied that he had restored me to my usual becoming humility; and then condescended to reply, with a quiet little smile.

"I mean to say that our Presidential Elections are disgraceful and abominable. If we were a nation of bedlamites turned loose, we could scarcely manage them worse than we do. Just look here," and he held up side by side the Bingtown *Gazette* and the Bingtown *Sentinel*. "Ac-

cording to these two respectable authorities, if we elect one of the presidential candidates we shall have a ruler who is an accomplished liar, thief, traitor, and fool; while if we choose the other, we shall have in the White House a tyrant, a gorilla, and a monster with two horrid heads and cloven feet! Now, is it not revolting in the extreme for honest, sensible people to be obliged to select between two such clusters of virtue as these?"

Here he stopped to recover his breath, which seemed well-nigh exhausted by the vehemence of his bitter ironical denunciation. Presently he resumed, more calmly:

"In short, take these audacious newspapers for it, and the conferring and acceptance of a presidential nomination is in itself the 'sum of all villainies.' And look, too, at their sublimely impudent arrogance in claiming an infallible knowledge of the final result; all derived from actual canvass and count. Now, I said a little while ago, that, according to these authorities here," and his lip curled scornfully, "we must take either one rascal or another to govern us. But it is much worse than that; for the said thorough canvass and careful count on both sides reveal the astounding fact, the National Constitution to the contrary notwithstanding, that we shall have them

both on our hands, the one by a majority on the popular vote of at least 200,000; and the other of at least 250,000. And what is to be done in that event, I am sure I can not tell."

We all joined in a hearty laugh here at the comical absurdity of the old gentleman's perplexity in view of the frightful catastrophe impending.

"If," he continued, "there is no other way to suppress this outrageous indecency, the newspapers ought to be sternly prohibited by law to publish any thing but the current news, without comment. A public censorship would be infinitely better than such a state of things as now exists."

"Why," I exclaimed, "would you abolish the liberty of the press?"

"Liberty of the press?" he echoed; "do you call this the liberty of the press? It is rather the licentiousness of the press. And, at the same time, these papers are abject slaves to selfishness, party, and corruption. No; I would break the fetters off them, and set them free. As it is, such newspapers are greater enemies of the public peace than the felon who steals our money. Shakespeare knew very well what he was saying when he wrote,

'Who steals my purse steals trash,' etc.

Now what would you think of a man who, in the name of liberty, should claim the right to indulge a course of actual lawlessness, by breaking windows, blocking the highways, knocking men down on the street, and such like. Would you throw around him the shield of our Constitution and laws? If the conduct of individuals is under constant surveillance, even in this Republic, why not the conduct of newspapers. Why should men as editors be allowed to run riot, any more than as private citizens?"

"But, Uncle Toby, how will you undertake to remedy the matter?" I inquired.

"Ah, there you have me, my boy. How any practical measure can be brought to bear directly upon it, I do not know. The evil is too widely spread to be reached in the courts, even were the laws framed with that view. But they are not; and can not be, while the moral honesty of the people is held in abeyance by the politicians who seek to gain and hold office through the very clamor which constitutes the wrong to be suppressed. Besides, I say, if the laws could be passed, and if they might be executed, it is quite certain that they would not be actually carried into effect; but would become a dead letter on the statute-book, like the majority of prohibitory liquor laws. And this is what made me

almost declare for a monarchy this morning," and he uttered a sudden chuckling laugh. "But even if we had that, we would always be liable to have bad sovereigns, whom we could not remove. The only way I know, and it is the best way at any rate, is for the religious press to take the work in hand. I can well remember when it was almost as bitter and malicious as the political press is now. But it has become quite courteous in the discussion of differences, and so can very appropriately set itself, both directly and indirectly, to reform politics in this particular. And it needs not become partisan herein; for the work is fully within its province, which is to oppose any thing and every thing corrupting and demoralizing in community. Yet it has hitherto been silent concerning this matter, perhaps from a false modesty, and is therefore largely responsible, in a negative way, for the prevalence of evil. If religious men were trained to frown down dishonest calumny, and demand mutual courtesy, the result could be accomplished. The political papers can not afford to disregard the wishes of Christian citizens; for these are too numerous, and furnish too large a proportion of the support by which those papers are sustained. A failing subscription-list can be made a wonderful rectifier of newspaper morals. But the teaching of

the religious press ought to be constant, and not merely heard in the whirl of a campaign; for then it may be overwhelmed. Settle the principle beforehand, in the minds and hearts of the people; and they will be prepared for the issue when it comes."

"I think you have made out a case, Uncle Toby," said I.

"Yes, I think so too," he replied, benignantly. "And suppose this plan were carried out, we would soon be done with mountebanks and buffoons trotting around over the country as political speakers, to excite the low passions of the multitudes. The orators would take their cue from the papers. They would speedily understand that the better part of their hearers would not tolerate discourtesy and abuse, that their speeches would not be published; or, if published, not read; and they would adapt themselves to the situation."

"Just so," I said.

"And," he continued, "the very same moral sentiment of the people thus brought into active exercise, and applied to political affairs, would soon put an end to election frauds of all kinds, importing voters, substituting votes, fraudulent counting, and stuffing ballot-boxes. For infamy would follow detection; and detection would be

sure, in most cases, to result from the vigilance of honest men. So that the risk would be too great, and the penalty too severe to justify such experiments in behalf of ambitious politicians And the influence of all this would introduce and maintain purity in all departments of the Government."

"Uncle Toby," I interrupted, "you are quite an enthusiast. Do you think either you or I will ever see such a political millennium set in?"

"As I said, it greatly depends on the religious press. Christianity is strong enough in this country to effect the result, if Christians will only set themselves about it, which they will do, I believe, if the religious press keep their attention turned to its importance and obligation.

"And, besides, I was going to say, when elections come to be fairly conducted, whoever is elected president will feel that he is not the president of a party, but of the whole country, and that, in all his honest efforts to fulfill the duties of his high office, he will have the candid co-operation of all parties; whereas, now, a president goes into office all bespattered with the calumnies of the campaign, to be malignantly watched and slandered throughout by the opposition, and thus cruelly hampered by unjust suspicions and downright misrepresentations. Of

course, there will be differences of opinion; and honest criticism is, at all times, to be allowed, and fair courteous controversy encouraged. And thus, after full discussion, let the majority rule. And as we gain more light and wisdom, we can make such changes as may be desirable in our legislation.

"To be sure, also, if a rogue gets into office, or seeks to get into office, by cunning intrigues and hypocrisy, as must always be the case at times, he ought to be exposed and his dishonesty be denounced. But even this should be, and would be if the press were pure, not hasty, rash, or eager; but with the calm and deliberate justice of an upright court, and only on evidence available and at hand. It would even be much better that occasionally a scamp should escape merited censure than that, as it is now, the honest and dishonest should alike, without discrimination, be condemned, merely for political effect. The offices could be surrounded by such guards and checks as, in connection with due care in selecting men to fill them, would, in the main, insure a proper discharge of duty therein."

Having thus fairly developed his philanthrophic scheme for the reformation of partisan politics, Uncle Toby settled down into a quiet self-satis-

faction. And, his indignation having for the present subsided, he rose from the table, picked up the offending papers, and, in his stately and deliberate manner, marched out of the room.

II.

CHURCH FAIRS AND FESTIVALS.

ONE evening, just as we were finishing tea, Jennie Bryan came bouncing in, as she often did, being an esteemed friend of the family. However, at this time, there was a special item of business with my uncle, which she thus announced to him:

"Uncle Toby"—for so every body called him—"we are getting up a fair and festival for New-year's, to buy some carpeting and furniture for our church; and we want you to help us. The price of admission is twenty-five cents, and I have brought a ticket to sell you;" and, as she spoke, she produced the ticket, evidently expecting to close the transaction at once, knowing that he was always very liberal in contributing to a good work.

But she missed her aim, and received nothing but the word "Pshaw!" uttered so impatiently and harshly that tears started to her eyes. And

my sister Lucy, with a stare of astonishment, exclaimed:

"Why, Uncle Toby!"

And well she might be astonished; for usually he is a remarkably polite and gallant old gentleman, and none of us had ever known him to address a lady, or indeed any one, so rudely before.

Lucy's exclamation decidedly woke him up; and he sprang to his feet, gently laid his hand on Jennie's head, and said:

"Forgive me, my dear; I was absent-minded, and I am sorry I spoke so."

Saying this, he gracefully impressed upon her forehead a kiss of reconciliation.

All of us, including Jennie herself, were heartily glad he had committed the blunder, since he atoned for it so grandly; and we loved the dear old man more than ever, if that were possible.

"And now," said he, resuming his seat, "I must give you a civil answer. I have no objection whatever to contribute something to your carpet and furniture; but I could not conscientiously buy a ticket to the festival, because I do not approve of such things."

"Do you think them wrong, Uncle Toby?" asked Jennie.

"Wrong for me, my dear; but I do not set up my notions as a standard for any one. Many good people give their sanction to such methods of raising money; and probably they are as apt to be correct in their judgment as I am in mine."

"Well," said Jennie, "tell us what you have against them."

And we all joined in the request.

"As you seem to desire it, I will state my views; but you need lay no particular stress on the old man's notions of things. As I said before, other people are as likely to be right as I am; and they differ from me in opinion upon this matter."

So careful was he to avoid the appearance of condemning his brethren, even when he thought them in error.

"I may say, then, in the first place, that, in connection with these fairs and festivals, I have observed methods adopted, sometimes, for obtaining money, which look to me to border on gaming. For example, it is not uncommon to have what is called a grab-bag, filled with small articles drawn out, one at a time, by purchasers who pay for the privilege, and who must choose at random, not knowing what they may chance to get. And I have seen staid matrons, of the

highest standing for piety in the Church, superintending this little catch-penny arrangement for promoting the interests of the Gospel; which, instead, appeared to my mind to stand at the very entrance of the way to the card-table. To be sure, gambling was not meant nor thought of, and the buyers respectively did not expect to obtain more than the value of the money paid—probably not so much as its value; but, still, there was the disposition brought into exercise of spending money on unknown chances, instead of open purchases; and so I always looked upon it, not only with a feeling of degradation, as though the dignity of religion were there being thrown away, but with the apprehension that the plan was directly fostering the gambling instincts of poor human nature, always too prone to evil, even with all the dikes which can be thrown up to check and restrain the currents of depravity.

"Again: I have witnessed another scheme, which I think tends to the same result, though not so objectionable, perhaps, as the one I have mentioned. I refer to what is called the post-office; which, as a mere play for children, might be quite amusing and innocent, but, as a means of collecting money for religious uses, is more than questionable; not only giving rise to much

nonsense, but encouraging the spending of money in the dark, and to no profit.

"The worst of all, in this point of view, is the ring-cake game, which contains the very essence of gambling, and differs nothing, in principle or morality, from any lottery or gift enterprise. A gold ring is baked in a cake, which is very thinly sliced; and the slices are sold at about the price of the ring for each, the purchasers thus paying their money with the view of getting the ring in return with their cake. Comment on such a practice seems to me quite superfluous."

"But, Uncle Toby," said Jennie, "to quiet your apprehensions, I will inform you that we intend to have none of these things at our festival. I believe we are all opposed to them up our way as much as you are. We will only have square, open buying and selling; and people can buy or not, just as they please—although," she mischievously added, "we may be tempted to put upon our articles a rather high retail price, the proceeds being devoted to a good cause."

"Well, my dear, I am glad to know that you intend to set none of those traps. It is a happy riddance, certainly. But, then, there are still other difficulties seriously in my way."

"We would like to hear of them, Uncle Toby," Jennie responded.

"Since I am at the confessional," he replied, smiling, "I will proceed, then, to unburden my mind, hoping at the end to receive absolution for any error. I have seen it arranged, at the close of festivals, to send to the poor—who, of course, were excluded from the scene of festivities by their want of money—the scraps and fragments which otherwise would have to go the dogs, and sell the valuable cakes at an auction, sometimes enlivened by witticisms, and even buffoonery, to make the articles go off briskly, just as we are likely to see in a street vendue. It always made me feel ugly, I regret to say, and brought forcibly to mind certain Roman Catholic practices which you may find graphically described in Harper's *Monthly Magazine*, for May, 1855, by a traveler in Brazil, South America. These occur some forty days after Lent, at a festival blasphemously called the Festival of the Holy Ghost; which is preceded for about five weeks by solicitors parading the streets, accompanied by negro musicians, carrying small crimson banners with the figure of a dove in a triangle, calling at every house, and gathering a grotesque collection of eggs, bread, fruit, dry goods, live fowls, etc., besides money. Connected with the festival itself are, of course, many blasphemous things which I shall not describe, leaving you to read the account

for yourselves in "Harper," and with which I would by no means compare any thing in your decent festival. But as the auctions therein somewhat resemble ours, although much worse, I may be pardoned for referring to this point rather more clearly. Usually, a professional buffoon is employed, whose business it is to sell cakes, pies, confectionery, live chickens, pigeons, etc. He frequently changes his costume, appearing at one time as a general, then a bishop, then a Quaker, and so on. Occasionally, he takes his stand on a pair of stilts, and, to spy out a bidder, uses an enormous eye-glass; that is, a large tin ring. All sorts of antics are indulged to excite merriment and quicken bidding. Now, I have seen similar things, though not in so exaggerated a form, at our festivals and fairs. But even where antics are not practiced, nor drollery resorted to, in order to excite bidding, the very idea is revolting to me of procuring any adjunct of public worship, in any degree, by the results of an auction."

"Well," said Jennie, laughing, "I will see that there is no auction at our festival; but the poor shall have the cakes, as well as the fragments. So you need not fear to come on that account."

He resumed:

"You will say, perhaps, that hitherto I have

only spoken of abuses; and that it is unfair to argue against the use of any thing from its abuse. And, in principle, you will say rightly; and yet the abuses I have mentioned are so apt to creep in that, to some extent, they have the force of legitimate argument against that to which they so readily attach. But let us look, now, at the essential features of the question. In general, it takes a month, or longer, to prepare for a fair and festival, or even for a festival alone. And the burden falls chiefly upon the ladies,—since the men graciously leave the details to them, with a loving trust similar to that which leads the noble Indian husband to allow his squaw to hoe the corn, prepare buffalo-robes, pitch the wigwam, or take care of the ponies, while he goes fishing or hunting."

We all laughed; and Jennie remarked:

"You are too hard, Uncle Toby."

"Well, well, as I judge, I am only stating what I have observed. I do not mean to say that the men give no help at all; but it is the women who are on the active committees, principally, and who, therefore, by the time the matter is fairly over, are utterly disgusted, exhausted, and, perhaps, some of them laid on a bed of sickness, by their zeal and diligence in making the affair a creditable success. All in a good

cause, of course; but a good cause which could be better served in some other way, and in a nobler form of self-sacrifice, I think. They do not complain, it is true; and they would not thank me, I presume, for volunteering in their behalf; but I do wish men could be made to feel that the necessity—if it ever is really necessary—of this tiresome labor and anxiety—for there is always extreme anxiety for fear of failure on account of bad weather, indifference of the people, or some untoward accident—simply results from their delinquency in the duty of giving.

"I know it is said that such things attract money from persons who are not members of the Church; and, in a measure, it may be true. But I believe as much, or more, could be collected from the outside, without all this huckstering in the Church, by direct approach. For even sinners are not slow to recognize the wholesome influence of Churches in a community, and are therefore willing to contribute to their support. They who are otherwise are not seen at festivals. And those who are contributors are often absent likewise; because, as is usually remarked, while it takes twenty-five cents to go in, it requires ten or fifteen dollars to get out again. They look upon it as a kind of trap, and so stand clear of it.

"And consider, also, that when a festival is not—as it frequently is—a downright failure, yielding not even expenses, the results are always meager in proportion to the exertions made and the time wasted in preparing for it. As an investment, it surely does not pay. Money may be got together, it is true; but, ordinarily, a much greater sum can be collected in the same time, without the trouble and hard work it involves.

"But I have not yet indicated my greatest objection to the whole matter. This is based on principle, and not policy; and I will explain it as clearly as I can, so that you may understand me. I believe that the support and practice of religion should be made a systematic business, as much as banking or selling dry goods. And what would you think of a man who could only be induced to attend to his proper avocation by spasmodic enticements, and now and then giving him a party? You would surely regard him as very badly balanced, and hardly be inclined to humor his whim as to business, by thus leading him, as you would tole a pig along the highway, by strewing grain where you wish to have it follow. And this explains what I meant a little while ago by saying that if there be any necessity for festivals, it is based directly upon

the delinquency of Christians in the duty of systematic giving.

"You will, I think, be able to see at once that, to fix up a festival in order to get a man to contribute for the support of the Church, is to appeal merely to his appetite, or animal nature, instead of his principle, or conscience; and this can be no advantage, but rather an injury to his moral character. And is not this a plain example of doing evil that good may come? If we extract or induce a dollar out of a man's pocket—no matter to what purpose it may be applied—we deprive him of the spiritual improvement which results from the consciousness of doing a good deed; for this consciousness can only be connected with a purely voluntary act, prompted by the motive of love to God or man. I am persuaded that, in a matter of duty, there ought never to be any inducements except such as the Scriptures present. Even if a man could externally keep all the divine commandments from outward motives, it would be of little value; for it would be a mere legalism, and not genuine obedience.

"The great fault of professing Christians is worldliness; and this we can never overcome by worldly remedies. I know the maxim is, that we must fight Satan with fire; but this is a very

poor weapon against such an adversary, who can be subdued much more effectually by prayer. And so, in trying to subvert worldly-mindedness in the Church, we are not likely to gain any thing by arts and devices, but must rely entirely upon the Gospel principle of love, directing all our plans to the end of bringing Christians up to this great standard in all things. It would shock me very much to think of St. Paul appealing to the good sisters of the Church at Corinth to get up a festival for the relief of the poor saints at Jerusalem. He did appeal to the Church, but it was on high moral grounds; and he accordingly advised them to lay by in store, and, on every first day of the week, to bring their offerings, as God had prospered them, with a cheerful mind, to the place of assembling for public worship.

"We would better do without many things which are tasteful and appropriate in our churches, than to obtain them by means tending to debase the moral sentiment of Christians, or, in the slightest degree, to injure their spiritual character. Character is every thing — means, nothing, in comparison. Indeed, means are worthless, except as they advance or improve character.

"And so you perceive that I object even to the best-managed Church festivals, on the ground

that they aim too low and appeal to the wrong motives of action; substituting, in the stead of voluntary giving, a kind of sensual temptation to duty. And hence I never patronize them, however much I may sympathize with their ultimate purpose. It may not be wrong for others with differing views; it would be wrong for me.

"And now, my dears, I am afraid you will regard me as a sour, morose old grumbler, wantonly interfering with social enjoyment"—

"O no, indeed," we all exclaimed, in a breath, and sincerely.

He seemed pleased with the interruption, and presently resumed:

"I have a great horror of asceticism in all its forms, and I do love to see social cheer everywhere around me. I believe religion embraces and requires it. And, notwithstanding all I have said, I am heartily in favor of Church festivals, and would like to see them statedly introduced into all Churches."

We all stared, but were silent, wondering what could be coming next.

"I think," he continued, "we ought to prepare such festivals at certain times, and all take part therein; for many hands make light work, you know. And I would call to them all the rich and the poor, so as to bring them together into

close brotherly sympathy, just as, in private life, we have our family reunions at Thanksgivings or Christmas-days. And if any were unable to attend, I would have a portion sent to them, in a cleanly, tasteful, inviting form, to show them they were not forgotten in the delightful communion; something as the Roman Catholics carry the Host to the sick, although I would avoid the display which they love to make in that matter. Such, no doubt, were the ancient Agapæ, or Love-feasts, in the primitive Church; and such they remained, until the Church became corrupt, and turned them into scenes of disgraceful revelry.

"I would favor contributions, too, in direct connection with these festivals, and on such occasions would have boxes placed to receive the gifts; but have it distinctly understood that there is no taxation, or even tacit assessment, but every donation is to be purely voluntary. Many poor persons would be glad thus to present a thank-offering to the Lord, like the poor widow publicly commended by the Savior in the Temple.

"We do have something similar, not only in our Sunday-school picnics and excursions, which, properly managed, are a means of good, but also in the festive gatherings of the children around

the Christmas-tree. And yet these, I think, are sometimes fatally perverted by an unintentional but invidious distinction between the rich and the poor; for parents are allowed to bring their private presents, which should be distributed at home, and to place them on the tree. Thus, one will receive a valuable book or a gold watch, while the next will get only a tin-whistle or a few sticks of candy, and be ashamed of his meager gift. Others, perhaps, can only look on, their parents being unable to give them any thing; or else, what is very little better, are put on a kind of reserve, or special poor list. Abolish all this; and place rich and poor on a level here, distributing to all only presents of about equal value, although the articles themselves may be varied, so as to avoid monotony. Then no sensitive feelings will be wounded, and a flow of social enjoyment will pervade the entire school."

As he concluded, he took out his pocket-book and handed Jennie a ten-dollar bill, quietly saying:

"I wish to contribute this toward your carpeting and furniture."

She seemed surprised, and, expressing her thanks, departed, well pleased.

Lucy and I went to the festival; but I did not enjoy it as well as I expected, for the worn

and jaded appearance of the ladies on the Executive Committee recalled Uncle Toby's objections forcibly to my mind. To this day, I am unable to tell whether his arguments are sound or not; but I have never been able to answer them to my own satisfaction. Had he urged them arrogantly or dictatorially, I might have defied them; but presented, as they were, in a modest and unassuming manner, they have exerted a silent influence upon me which I can not resist.

III.

VIEWS OF OLD AGE.

ON the 25th of May, a beautiful Saturday morning, Uncle Toby came down from his sleeping-room, as usual, with his benevolent face lighted up by a happy smile, and was received with a hearty greeting by the family group; each of the girls presenting a little token along with the morning kiss, for it was his birthday. I had no gift except my warmest congratulations, and best wishes for the future. He had a drawer containing quite a collection of keep-sakes; and more than once have I beheld him shed tears over it, as the memory of by-gone years came upon him with the view of the gathered treasures, especially when his eye would glance upon a diamond wedding-ring and a gold-clasp Bible, which were relics of his darling wife and a noble son just entering a promising manhood, both of whom, within a single week, two years previous, had

been transplanted to a heavenly clime. In that drawer, he carefully deposited my sisters' mementos; and then came down again to breakfast. During the meal he was apparently thoughtful and sad; and uttered not a word, except in asking a blessing on the food.

But immediately afterward, we ushered him into the parlor, where, to his evident surprise, he found about a score of young persons and children awaiting his appearance. His countenance brightened again as he saluted them, and received their cheerful response.

According to a prior arrangement, Jennie Bryan approached, and met him a little inside the parlor door, and began making a short speech. But, for some cause, she became confused, burst into tears and desisted. I instantly came to her relief, and offered a few commonplace remarks, which I do not think worth repeating here, and then Jennie presented him, as the testimonial of the company, a valuable gold watch; upon the back of which were engraved, in small, but very distinct letters, the names of the donors, nearly a hundred in number. It was a spontaneous expression of love on the part of the young people of the city of Bingtown; and it affected him very deeply. For a few minutes he stood before them in a meditative silence, and then said:

"Words can not express my thanks, my dear young friends, for this very beautiful and unexpected testimonial. How precious to an old man, who is apt to feel lonely and desolate, is a tribute of young and loving hearts you never can know until you shall have attained, as I pray God you all may attain, the fullness of days. I accept this, therefore, as a priceless treasure. It is, too, so appropriate, although I do not suppose you thought of this point at all, as a constant reminder that time is passing away, and eternity rapidly approaching. To the young, a watch may address admonition; to the old, a voice of solemn warning.

"I am sixty-five years of age to-day. It seems to you, no doubt, that a long time must elapse before you will reach so late a period of life; and this is, indeed, true. There is much to be done, and much to be endured, during the interval. If you live so long, you will see much, and, I trust, will learn much. But yet, to me, in looking back, the years dwindle into a very brief space. And it was so with the patriarch Jacob, as he stood before King Pharaoh, who asked him his age. He replied, 'the days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years. Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.' I can not, however, join with the pa-

triarch by saying that my days have been evil; for, on the whole, my life has been quite a happy one; although I have experienced many griefs, have seen many friends fall around me, and am now left without a wife or a child in the world.

"Since it is the work of a life-time, my dear young friends, to prepare for old age, I take this opportunity to give you the benefit of a few plain instructions, drawn from my observation and experience, hoping that you may retain enough of what I may say to guide you aright, and save you from some painful mistakes, into which I have sometimes fallen for want of guidance and knowledge.

"You know men generally pursue certain employments in the prime of life, and even in early manhood; partly to supply present necessities, and partly to provide for the comfort of old age. And this is to be commended, if it is not allowed to trench upon higher duties, or induce covetous desire. And bear in mind, that this needful provision for old age is not the work of a day, or a year, but of many years.

"But the great trouble is, that, while men are thus laboring to supply the bodily wants of declining life, they forget to make other accumulations which are much more necessary in order to render old age cheerful and contented; and to

make which properly, requires, like amassing a fortune, close study and diligent attention through all our earlier, as well as later manhood.

"In the first place, we want to amass a large wealth of social feeling and sympathy. I am afraid you have had occasion to observe some very aged persons who showed a constant fretfulness and peevishness, which tended to irritate all around them, and kept themselves in a state of helpless misery. Their hearts, like their bodies, had become all shriveled up, and tough, hard, and stringy, if I may say so. But there is a way to keep the heart, which is the fountain of life, always soft and warm; so that, as the apostle has beautifully said, while the outward man perishes, the inward man is renewed day by day. I was well acquainted with a very learned minister of Christ, the Rev. Charles Elliott, who used to declare his intention to preserve his boyhood unimpaired to the end of life; and I believe he effectually did so. But, in order to this, provision must be made beforehand, and all the way along, just as is the case with material wealth. We can not begin to acquire too soon. Life is short enough to accumulate the riches of the heart; and our failures therein can not be made up by gift or inheritance, as may sometimes be the case in regard to our estates. Herein, we

must emphatically be the architects of our own fortunes. If one lives selfishly, and regardless of the interests of others, and is careless in forming sound friendships; if he is exacting, grinding, and stingy, he ought to expect old age to be bereft of the soothing voice of sympathy; and should not be surprised, if, when his infirmities have withdrawn him from the ways of active business, men will not care to look after him, but will leave him to repine in the selfishness he has fostered through life. It is a fixed law, that as we sow we must reap. We can not sow tares and reap wheat, a fact of which, in the moral field, men are prone to lose sight altogether. To change the figure, we find men continually refusing to weave into their every-day life the moral culture and improvement they need; but postpone these until, as they suppose, they will have time to attend to this matter. And when that period comes, they find it is too late, their character being molded and fixed, and their opportunities are frittered away. If we will not make up our own characters of set purpose, circumstances will make them for us, and in a way we shall have ample cause to lament.

"We must also learn the art of keeping up with inevitable changes. For, by the time one becomes old, most of those who started with him

have fallen by the way-side; and unless he can, by an earnest social sympathy, cultivate a facility of forming new friendships, he must feel lonely and forsaken. It is not uncommon for old men to bemoan that times have sadly changed for the worse since their youthful days. In general, this is a serious mistake. The trouble is that they have failed to amass by culture a wealth of sympathy with humanity at large, which would enable them to enter into the feelings and views of the present age, and to feel, as did the ancient heathen philosopher, when he exclaimed, 'I am a man, and, therefore, whatever concerns men is of interest to me.'

"Especially ought men and women always to cultivate a deep and tender love for little children. I have sometimes heard even young ladies say, with a scornful toss of the head, 'I can't bear children. I hate to be troubled with them.' And then I could not help thinking to myself, 'You do not know what you are saying. Your social nature is wrong, or you could not speak thus. And you will, some day, need the wealth of the sympathy you are now contemptuously casting away from you.' The old man who tenderly loves little children, not merely his own descendants, will be found gentle, patient, and kind to every body, and will be loved and happy. But

if one lives selfishly through life, he will find little ones an annoyance to him in old age, because he has never learned to sympathize with them; and thereby he will lose an ever fresh and flowing fountain of joy. I, therefore, advise all these young gentlemen and ladies to cultivate an earnest love for little children.

"Again, you will need in old age a good stock of general ideas, to keep the mind from preying on itself. You have observed how the flesh falls away, and the bones appear, in an animal deprived of sufficient food. So, for want of nutriment, many an old man's mind has become thin and feeble. To avoid this, we need, all through life, to keep up a habit of reading and thinking. Most men make a terrible mistake in confining their thoughts to the mere routine of business; and then, when their business days are ended, by the infirmity of age, their thinking all falls away from them, and their mind becomes a blank, or a barren waste. Even in the busiest career, we can, by improving odd moments, lay in a fair store of general knowledge. Of course, we need to think about our business, and understand it thoroughly; but it ought not to monopolize our entire attention.

"We can never form a habit of thinking in old age. We must do that before-hand, and all

through life. Even with all we can do in this matter, many items of knowledge will be forgotten, as the mind measurably partakes of the weakness of the body. But we can retain the result of a thoughtful life, at least sufficiently to have something useful to think about, and retain a relish for solid reading, which will preserve us from the rattling, chattering garrulity of empty-headed old age, so like the incoherent mumbling of a superannuated parrot.

"Remember that old age is, or ought to be, peculiarly meditative, being withdrawn from the crowd jostling in the busy walks of life. And it ought, therefore, to be able to look back upon a career all strewn with good deeds. Youth looks forward on a future all aglow with the coloring of a vivid imagination; but age must look backward on the past divested of all rosy fancies and standing boldly out in stern reality. If this past has been spent foolishly, the folly is apt to be apparent. If wisely, the contemplation is one of pleasure and satisfaction. Of course, on a review, there will always be enough of deficiency, at any period of life, to call for the deepest humility. Yet, if we have always aimed to live in the hearts of our fellow-men, we can not but be gratified by the reflection that we have not lived in vain. And how much better this is than to

know that, by grinding the poor and disregarding the cries of human misery, we have heaped up earthly treasures, which we must soon leave, perhaps to the curse and ruin of our children. And this, too, for mere sensual gratifications long since departed, leaving not even a pleasing recollection behind.

"I am afraid, my dear young friends, you will think it is too much trouble to form a good and well built character, and calls for too severe a self-denial. Alas, most of the world seem to think so. But, in reality, it pays well, even as we go along. He who cultivates humanity, loves to be humane. He who learns to think loves to think; and you know there is nothing too hard for love to do. Besides, these delights are very far superior to those transient and unsatisfactory pleasures connected with sensual pursuits. Can any one tell me wherein that man's life is better than that of a wild animal, who throws away or shuts up his intellect and heart, and devotes his time to the 'lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life?' Indeed, the animal has the same kind of enjoyment, and without the toil and anxiety by which the man attains it, and herein, as well as in other respects, has much the advantage. Many a man has made himself so wretched by stultifying his true manhood as

to envy the happiness of a frisking dog. But surely God intended us, although we are subject to sin and suffering, to be happier than dumb beasts.

"And now I have spoken of the necessity of forming a good character in preparation for old age, and given you some hints as to the manner of doing it. But I must not fail to urge upon you that grand preparation for life and death, for time and eternity, without which all others are worse than futile. I mean the religion of the Gospel. One of the wisest of kings declared, 'A hoary head is the crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness;' and the Psalmist prayed, 'And now, when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not.' I have seen persons much older than I am, whose faces shone with an almost angelic brightness, from the blissful peace and sweetness of their hearts. And to you I may say, without egotism, if there is any thing in me which has attracted your love, any thing that you consider at all worthy of this beautiful testimonial in my hand, it is all owing to the grace of God by which I have tried to form my life.

"Nothing can be further from the truth than the apprehension young people often indulge that religion would rob them of their youthful pleas-

ures, and constrain them to an unnatural, gloomy life. It is not so. The very contrary is the truth. Religion was sent to make men natural. It is only sin which makes them unnatural, and deprives them of joy and beauty and majesty.

"A godly life is a constant molding of character, and to this end, it adapts every thing, home, friends, business, successes and failures, pain and pleasure. It make all circumstances a means of good. We are always under discipline; which of necessity implies correction and improvement.

"And then, when old age comes, we find that the pure love which constitutes the essence of religious character has kept our hearts alive and full of sympathy. It soothes, comforts, refines, and throws upon the declining years the mellowed radiance of a glorious setting sun. If it shall please God to spare my life to a ripe old age, may this be my happy portion, and may it be yours.

"I have said that old age must have ideas, and these are richly furnished by the Gospel. It offers the most sublime knowledge, and makes it familiar to the mind. And it goes on brightening more and more unto the perfect day. An aged minister, Peter Cartwright, lately died, just after having completed his eighty-seventh year. A visitor states that, for many days, he showed

no interest in any thing around him, but at the name of Jesus, his countenance would always brighten. Was not that beautiful, even before death living in the very precincts of heavenly glory?

"And now, again, I return you my feeble, but earnest thanks for your love to me, which is a rich and precious blessing. And should I grow very old and helpless among you, the voices of the young shall always be as the sweetest music to my soul. You shall always retain a place in my warmest affections. God bless you, and give you all a happy and prosperous life."

He ceased. But what had come over us all? The occasion called for joy, and here were we all bathed in tears. These were soon dried, however, and the company made their way to a nice, large vacant lot, near by our dwelling; Uncle Toby walking slowly along, smiling upon the upturned faces of a bevy of little girls, who had fairly captured him, and were clinging to him wherever they could secure a hold. There being no school that day, they had all been granted a half holiday by their parents, in honor of the event which brought them together. Uncle Toby remained with us during the forenoon, joining, with a keen zest, in all our sports. The afternoon he devoted as usual to business.

IV.

ON LAWYERS.

ONE morning, Uncle Toby noticed, in the papers, a reference to the controversy concerning the ethics of the legal profession, arising, some time since, from David Dudley Field's connection with the dishonest Erie Railroad suits, in the accounts of which my uncle had taken a deep interest. He remarked:

"Here is something in your line, my boy;" and read the item aloud to me.

"Well, Uncle Toby," I responded, "what do you think of this whole matter?"

I was desirous of starting him upon an expression of his sentiments, which, I well knew, were decided, upon the question involved.

He replied:

"Mr. Field made a very able defense, as able, I think, as his case would admit. And, in the main, I suppose him to be an upright man; but

he surely was in the wrong here, and if his ideas were to prevail generally they would produce a disastrous condition of professional morals."

"Have you not a very low estimate of our profession, as to morals, at any rate?" I inquired.

"Not at all," said he; "but the very contrary. I think we would get along poorly without it."

"Well," I replied, "I believe our profession is not generally esteemed highly as to a due regard for morality."

"Perhaps not. But it is your own fault; for you certainly do tolerate practices among you which would disgrace men in any line of business, and which are therefore well adapted to throw suspicion upon the whole fraternity. And I fear this Field controversy will by no means tend to divert prejudice from you; for he has openly avowed the propriety of sharp practice in shielding wrong and giving it success, and has thrown down the restraints of moral principle in the conduct of lawsuits."

Perceiving that I now had him fairly launched, I remained silent, and he resumed:

"No, my boy, there ought to be laws; and there ought to be lawyers to expound them. And while our legal system has many things in it which bear the marks of human imperfection,

yet, with all its defects, it is a noble scheme. Lawless violence, or anarchy, in any degree, can never exist without destroying or marring the dearest rights of men; and that system is best which is most easily carried into effect; so that simplicity is a leading characteristic of any effectual code.

"Not only must civil laws be established among *men*, but we are led to believe, from the teachings of the Scriptures, that, among the pure beings of the heavenly world, something of the same kind exists; for they plainly speak of 'principalities and powers in heavenly places,' and reveal to us not only an order of angels, but likewise an archangel, who must derive his title from possessing a high office, or pre-eminent authority. And how much more needful are order and law to rule selfish and wicked men, I have no occasion to remark. St. Paul even declares civil rulers to be ministers of God; and that, too, with reference to the wretched tyrant Nero.

"Nor can I be unmindful of the eminent men who have graced the profession and blessed the world in times past, many of whom have been upright Christians—Alfred the Great, Grotius, Puffendorf, Vattel, Hale, Coke, Blackstone, and many others, in Europe; and, in

America, Story, Kent, Marshall, M'Lean, Parsons, and many others—men whose genius will forever adorn the historic page which records their judicial wisdom. Certainly, the world to-day is much the better for such men's having lived in it to shape the noble science of jurisprudence. And it is gratifying to know that, while small politicians and selfish demagogues take it upon themselves to sneer at the Higher Law, its obligations are recognized and set forth with such exquisite clearness in that great text-book of the profession, Blackstone's Commentaries.

"It is likewise the truth that nearly all the wise legislation which has shaped the destinies of the world has originated with men learned in the law. And while, perhaps, it is always judicious to constitute legislative bodies, to some extent, with representatives of all departments of business, yet law-making must be guided and molded by legal minds, in order to secure efficiency and success."

Here I began to feel decidedly proud of my profession, of which Uncle Toby had so exalted an idea.

He continued:

"And it has so happened in the natural, or rather providential, course of events, that, up to the present time, all our Presidents have been

lawyers, except three who were successful generals, and owed their elevation to that cause; namely, Washington, Taylor, and Grant. And these, of course, called around them, as constitutional advisers, men of eminence in the legal profession."

And now, for a moment, the Presidency seemed to beckon to me, until, unfortunately, I recollected that there were so many skilled lawyers who probably could be induced to accept the arduous position, *pro bono publico*, that my chances were somewhat dull—which consideration promptly smothered my rising ambition.

"Leading merchants find it to their advantage constantly to keep learned legal advisers employed, not to conduct suits so much as to show them how to avoid suits. And I regard the office of counselor as the most honorable branch of the profession. Its province is to prevent litigation, rather than encourage it."

"You seem, then, to think," said I, "that the legal profession should be treated as public physicians are said to be in some countries; that is, they are paid a good salary so long as general health prevails, which is stopped whenever an epidemic appears."

He smiled, and replied:

"That does not seem to be a bad notion,

and, applied to the law, it might work a great benefit.

"One thing which, according to my judgment, has tended greatly to lower the true dignity of the profession is the facility with which thoroughly incompetent men can intrude into it. I have known persons admitted to the bar as practitioners who knew very little more of the principles of legal science than a wild Indian—a fictitious examination, a fee to the clerk for a certificate, comprising the whole process. I am personally acquainted with a judge who avows his belief that every one should have a chance to do what he can. But if this sentiment be correct, the doors should be flung wide open, and the public invited to walk in at pleasure, dispensing with the glaring farce of examination and formal admission. As it is, ignorant men are sent out, under the indorsement of the courts, to tamper with the people's rights of person and property, and win cases, often, before juries, by the sheer force of brazen impudence and blackguardism. Why, I read once of one of these fellows deriding the Common Law of England, which his opponent had quoted in argument, and upon the ground that we were not under English law at all since the Revolution, in which our fathers fought for the very purpose of delivering

us from English rule! And in that way he carried his point triumphantly."

"Not very complimentary to juries, Uncle Toby," said I.

"Be it so," he answered; "you know, as well as I do, how juries are generally made up, and what tricks are resorted to in order to keep intelligent men off them in a case. We hear a great deal, it is true, about intelligent juries; but, for the most part, it must be what you lawyers term a legal fiction.

"I once knew a lawyer who would occasionally clear a client accused of crime by providing him a horse and assisting him to escape; which, I suppose, might properly be called, in law, 'dodging the question.' This attorney's legal brethren laughed at his tricks, and took no pains, as they ought to have done, to banish him from the courts.

"There are lawyers who unblushingly maintain that the oath of office taken upon admission to practice, requiring them to be true to their clients, places them under obligation to gain their causes, if possible, by any means whatever. And it is mortifying that so prominent a man as Mr. Field should give his sanction to this wretched delusion. The oath to be true to a client surely does not require one to be false to

any thing else, especially to the meaning and intent of the law itself. But when men are determined to do a wrong act, or indulge a wrong habit, it is extremely easy to give the affair a semblance of right, or, at least, of plausibility, by the exercise of ingenuity in perverting the truth. When a lawyer has vindicated, so far as he can, the actual rights and interests of his client, he is acquitted of his oath, whatever may be the result. And, in the defense of a criminal manifestly guilty, the attorney's duty simply is to see that the accused has a fair trial, and is convicted, if at all, according to the forms and sanctions of the law.

"Many lawyers, also, think themselves justified by professional honor in taking any cause which may be offered. I have known professedly religious practitioners defend, with the utmost of their skill, men whom they knew to be defiant transgressors of the law, and urge suits which had not a single principle of common honesty or legal right in their favor. I am acquainted with one of this class of attorneys who, at one time, received a gold-headed cane from an insolent liquor retailer, in token of admiration for the skill by which he had been taught to snap his fingers in the very face of justice and adhere to the illegal pursuit of his ruinous employment.

The lawyer was a prominent member of the Church; but was not ashamed to parade his blood-stained gift, and boast of the manner in which he had acquired it. Ah, when will the legal profession abhor to lend itself to cloak the schemes of villains with the forms of legal procedure? Abraham Lincoln was a model in this regard, although one of the most successful lawyers in the country. He never would, knowingly, help a man in wrong-doing by means of a technical advantage arising from the absence or death of a material witness, or any thing of the kind. A man once offered him a large fee to engage him in a land-case, which he expected to gain by the misfortune of his opponent. 'But,' said Mr. Lincoln, after hearing the statement of the case. 'the right is not yours, but belongs to your opponent. Although, no doubt, you will gain the cause, I can not assist you to inflict this wrong upon your neighbor.' And this was his constant principle. Sometimes the lawyers would remark among themselves, 'Well, Abe is on the wrong side this time. He is not trying.' If he were deceived by a client, and thus led to undertake a bad cause, he would merely see that the trial was fairly conducted, and no more.

"A large class of lawyers not only take whatever cases, good or bad, may come to hand, but

do not scruple slyly to stir up suits concerning matters which ought to be (and would be, but for the pertinacious meddling of selfish men) settled between the parties privately. Of course, it is unprofessional to do this, and would bring disgrace if done openly; but there are many ways of doing it stealthily. And thus contestants are sometimes literally ruined in their affairs by being artfully enticed into suits, in which the old Chinese adage is fully verified, that the gainer in a lawsuit gains a cat and loses a cow. The dockets are continually crowded with small causes, full of vexation, which ought never to have appeared in the courts at all.

"There is an abominable class of lawyers whose proper place is in the penitentiary, their peculiar province being to advertise for divorce suits, which they duly promise, for a consideration, to conduct, with the utmost speed and secrecy, to a successful termination. Now, this whole business of divorce has become a terrible evil, and will become worse and worse, I fear, until our legislators pay some attention to the divine proclamation, 'What God has joined together, let not man put asunder.' The facility with which divorces can be obtained, in any of our courts, is really frightful, and the frauds resorted to in order to secure them are still more so.

"Again: there are lawyers who appear to regard needless and expensive delays as personal or professional triumphs; and that, too, in cases such as mere questions of title, in which it is the interest of both parties to have a speedy decision. And these have but little difficulty in devising pretexts for effecting their purpose, especially when the court is crowded with business. And, in connection with this, these tricksters are full of technicalities, and seem unwilling to promote, at any time, the ends of justice, by bringing causes to an issue promptly, and placing them upon the sound basis of legal principle.

"The practice of browbeating and confusing honest witnesses prevails very widely, and is almost as dishonest as stealing. Whoever attempts it ought to be indicted for subornation of perjury. I have heard lawyers, who plumed themselves upon a special sharpness in this particular, ask a witness such a question as this: 'Now, how comes it to pass that you can recollect thus and thus, but can not remember so and so?'—a question which no man on earth can answer; and for repeating which, it seems to me, an attorney, after admonition, should be heavily fined for contempt of court. Every one has experienced the phenomenon on which the silly and impertinent question is based—none can explain it.

There are, also, many other modes of tangling or embarrassing an honest witness, unaccustomed to being placed under the cross-fire of legal sharpshooters—all which ought to be sternly banished from the courts.

"There is an inherent dignity of justice and law that ought to be sacredly respected by all persons, and enforced by every tribunal in the land, though not after the fashion of the Illinois Supreme Court, in its arbitrary tyranny in lately dealing with the editors of the Chicago *Evening Journal*. And, until this dignity is properly recognized, legal proceedings must often be, as now, a miserable sham. To be sure, we have no reason to expect an entire freedom from human imperfection in courts, any more than anywhere else; but we certainly have a right to demand therein a radical reform in many important particulars."

Now, I desire it distinctly understood, for the honor of my profession, that I heartily indorse all that Uncle Toby has said concerning lawyers above. I can not thank Mr. Field for endeavoring to remove the standard of moral obligation from our court-rooms; but, on the contrary, desire to see it universally more strictly observed.

V.

ON PETIT JURIES.

"IT is high time the miserable petit jury system were swept to the winds," said Uncle Toby, one morning; "as might have been expected, Mrs. Fair, the wicked California murderess, who deliberately shot a prominent attorney of San Francisco, in open daylight, for kissing his own wife, has been turned loose upon community at last by a packed jury secured out of nearly one hundred and fifty men summoned before the court for selection. Conviction by one jury, new trial granted upon an unmeaning technicality, criminal discharged, and here an end. No wonder the papers of California and elsewhere, denounce the whole proceeding as a farce. But then to what purpose? The mischief is done, and the denunciations will not prevent a disgraceful repetition, whenever an opportunity occurs. And no wonder, either, that honest men look on courts with

suspicion, where such manifest perversions of justice are even possible. Down with the petit jury system, I say, in all cases, civil and criminal. At the very best, it is an absurdity in a Republican form of Government; and, ordinarily, it is a monstrous excrescence upon the administration of the law.

"Indeed, one of the most serious faults of the legal system is its stubborn tenacity in clinging to obsolete antiquities for ages after the reasons have passed away on which they were founded. And in nothing is this more ridiculously apparent than in this very matter of trying causes by jury."

"Why, Uncle Toby," I exclaimed, surprised at his unpatriotic demonstration; "do you not know that the right of trial by jury is regarded as one of the safeguards of our Constitutional liberty?"

"Yes, indeed; I know that a vast amount of fulsome eulogy has been expended upon the privilege to every man of being tried, or having his rights determined, by a 'jury of his peers;' and it has been styled, time and again, by swelling orators, the ark of safety, the palladium of liberty, and such nonsense. These are all pompous words of vanity, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing; and are, therefore, about as

valuable as the chattering of a magpie. Indeed, I am certain the speakers themselves attach no definite meaning to their utterances; and, as for me, I prefer to look at the matter for myself without any attention to the ravings of ranting orators."

"Your indignation seems to be all ablaze, Uncle Toby," I observed.

"Well, my boy, I am obliged to you for your kind and respectful rebuke. I spoke too warmly perhaps. But let us view the thing calmly, in the light of common sense. In my opinion the jury system never had any value, except as a bulwark against irresponsible tyranny. The great Magna Charta, which, indeed, is the source of our modern liberties, was wrested from the unscrupulous monarch, King John, whose meanness and perfidy were utterly unrestrained by any thing like moral principle, or political wisdom. Weak as a man, he was, nevertheless, by virtue of his position, and prerogatives, a most formidable oppressor as a sovereign. This written constitution, which he was compelled to grant his rebellious nobles, was, in its time, as valuable as was our Declaration of Independence in the Revolutionary struggle. It has still a permanent historic value, marking one of the most interesting and important epochs in civil jurisprudence. But

it does not follow, by any means, that its particular provisions have any practical use at the present day, where there is no absolute tyranny to curb. Assuredly, in King John's reign, it amounted to something to enjoy the right of referring decisions upon rights of person or property to a jury of peers, when there was nothing else to stand between the subjects and the despot, the office of judges in the courts, even, being subservient to his imperious will. But our situation bears no analogy to this. Here, every man is the peer of all others; so that, to whomsoever causes may be referred, the litigants, in any case, have their rights passed upon by their peers. And so, the jury question is reduced to one merely of practical expediency.

"The fiction of law underlying trials by jury is among the most glaring absurdities. It is said that questions of law are for the court, and questions of fact for the jury; or, in other words, the judge is incompetent to decide upon facts, and the jury to determine the law. And yet, in every case, the jury must find the facts in accordance with the legal bearings on the points in controversy, when they make up their final verdict. The judge sometimes 'charges' the jury in a complicated suit, and then, forsooth, the sage 'gentlemen of the jury,' under a single lesson in

legal science, are expected to become so learned and proficient in the profound wisdom and intricacies of the text-books and reports, as to make up a decision of unquestionable infallibility, with all the promptness and exactness of a weather-gauge.

"Now, even when a jury is composed of honest, and ordinarily intelligent, men, which is seldom the case, these are usually unaccustomed to sifting facts, weighing evidence, balancing probabilities, and reconciling apparent contradictions. And, generally, in cases of any degree of importance, the verdicts are merely lucky or unlucky guesses at truth. But what with challenges to the array, challenges to the panel, challenges for cause, and peremptory challenges, together with the general disposition of lawyers to seek jurymen whom they can influence, there is a great facility afforded of placing men in the jury-box whose honesty and intelligence are sadly at fault.

"And, in criminal cases of great notoriety, which especially require, for a proper decision thereupon, a sound judgment and strict integrity, the law, in most States of the Union, positively places a premium on ignorance, by excluding intelligent readers and thinkers from sitting upon the trial. In this reading age, it is impossible

that the events connected with an exciting crime should not be read in the newspapers by every well-informed citizen; and that some kind of an opinion should not be formed upon the facts detailed, and even expressed, in the course of conversation on the subject. And under the law, this is ground for the exclusion of any one from the jury. Yet we know how improbable it is that a fair-minded man will, on a single cursory reading, so fix his judgment, or adopt a prejudice, as to be impervious to new proof, or new statements, even. But the law seems to regard an opinion formed without critical examination as unchangeable, like the ancient Medo-Persian laws, even by a legal investigation, and therefore invites ignorance to step in, and pass upon law and evidence. It would be extremely interesting to have a greater absurdity than this produced. Surely, we may indulge the hope that the whole country will follow the wise legislation of Ohio and New York in this important respect, that is, if we are to retain the jury system at all.

"And what a wretched blunder it is to require unanimity in the verdicts rendered. One ignorant, stubborn man has it in his power to annul the judgment of eleven men wiser than himself. I once heard of a juryman who declared that

he never in his life met eleven as stubborn men as those associated with him in the trial of a certain cause. And the absurdity is rendered more farcical by compelling unanimity by starving the jury into a decision, as though a hungry man must, of necessity, possess a clearer insight.

"Besides, think of the ordinary expedients of the jurors themselves to arrive at an agreement, such as casting lots, making up compromise verdicts, and that, too, under the obligations of a solemn oath. If we must have juries, let us have the majority plan, by which each one could honestly maintain his independent judgment, and our chances of having correct decisions be greatly improved.

"And how much the abolition of the jury system would facilitate the business of the courts, you are a better judge than I. Also, the expenses of litigation would probably be reduced more than one-half. The time lost in making up juries, the delays of justice, which the system inevitably entails, are evils of the most serious character. Often, in a just cause, it would be better even for a litigant to lose it promptly, than gain it by protracted attendance upon the courts.

"The jury system, in criminal cases, very often

perverts the ends of justice altogether, as in this California case. As our juries are usually constituted, it is an easy matter for a skillful debater, or eloquent orator, such as great rogues are nearly always able to employ, to excite the passions and prejudices of a jury, so as to induce them to run riot over law and evidence, and acquit merely on the basis of compassion for the criminal. If the jury sympathize either with the prisoner or his counsel, acquittal is generally sure, no matter what the proofs may be, or if they are prejudiced against him, his case is hopeless, if the prosecution bear any semblance of plausibility. The reasonable doubt is quite readily supplied in the one case, and withdrawn in the other.

"Our Supreme Courts, both State and National, dispense with juries, in both civil and criminal causes. And what reason can be given why these may, and inferior courts may not, do this? All alike decide upon both law and fact.

"I have no definite opinion as to whether it is judicious to retain grand juries, in order to make presentments of crime for trial in the courts. None of the objections lie against these which may be fairly urged against the petit jury system, which, to sum up all in a few words, is useless, cumbrous, expensive, and absurd."

Now, I think Uncle Toby's views on this

matter are quite correct; but as legal reforms move very slowly, I have no hope of seeing any great change for a long time, at least. Still the petit jury must eventually disappear as hoary-headed errors become less revered, and common sense and simplicity more and more prevail.

VI.

ON PREACHING.

"YOUNG America forever!" exclaimed my Uncle Toby, looking over the Bingtown *Gazette* one Saturday morning; "he has vaulted into the pulpit at last."

"Ah," I replied, "it is to be hoped he will be more modest and respectful there than he is in the street."

"Not likely," said he; "he is as rampant there as elsewhere."

What gave rise to this was an item in the column of religious notices, to the effect that Rev. Jeremiah Queer would preach, as usual, at his church on Main Street, Sunday evening, and that his subject would be, on that occasion, "The Carrion Crows of Society."

"Now," continued Uncle Toby, "if this kind of thing does not succeed, let us, by all means, have a return to the kindred method of the

religious drama, which, in the Middle Ages, supplanted preaching altogether,—the leading events of the Gospel being represented theatrically, from Sabbath to Sabbath, with all needful stage furniture and stage action.

"Only the other day I read, in the Association monthly, an extract, headed 'Sensational Preaching,' which I copied in my memorandum-book, and will read to you:

"'All good preaching is sensational. It means setting forth startling truths in a startling way. It means setting people to thinking about God and duty. It is not necessary that ministers should be like one another, or tread in the steps of one another, to bring this about. They have only need, therefore, to feel the force of their message to awake a sensation. As my eye runs rapidly over the Church of the past, I find that the thrilling preaching has usually reaped the largest harvest. The people wept under Ezra's stirring appeals. When Jerome Narni preached in Rome, half the city went from the churches crying along the streets, "Lord, have mercy on us!" We all know how the people melted under the calm but keen words of Wesley and Edwards. I suppose Christ caused a greater flutter than any of his ministers. Imagine one of our staid pulpits adapting his meaning to a modern congregation, and hurling out his anathemas: Woe unto you, ye teachers, and government officers, and doctors, who pretend to be what you are not! If sensational preaching means getting out of old ruts, and on higher ground; if it means the keeping of the attention of a congregation, bewildered by the cares of the week, and keeping the snorers awake; if it means drawing the crowd that never looks into a church, and making them

feel that they are sinners and need a Savior,—then the more of such preaching we have the better.' (Rev. A. F. Lyon.)

"To be sure, 'if.' But what when the 'if' has no proper place here? Now, I am willing to accord to the writer of this extract full sincerity; and yet I must characterize his paragraph, above quoted, as unfair and misleading, in this, that it employs the word *sensational* out of its usual acceptance knowingly, and yet fails to indicate this departure, and so confounds matters which ought to be kept widely distinct. Had he used the word *effective*, instead of *sensational*, we might indorse what he says, with a slight abatement. I affirm that sensational preaching has not a single one of the attributes specified in the quotation; and, for a test of this, we need go no further than the advertisement before us in the *Gazette*. Take the subject announced herein, 'The Carrion Crows of Society,' and whereabouts you can fit it into the extract I should be glad to know.

"There is such a thing as acting the part of a mountebank in the pulpit. And it would doubtless draw a gaping crowd; but would it subserve the interests of religion? And the performance following such a notice as this is quite apt to be of that style. There must be a

consistency in things; and whoever finds it needful to draw an audience in this manner will be likely also to find it needful to keep them by adapting his discourses to their expectation, thereby excited. He must give them the entertainment to which he has invited them, or else there is a deception and cheat, and the disappointed herd will scatter again.

"At all events, to resort to such thimble-rigging as this looks to me like a tacit declaration that the intrinsic merits of the Gospel are too feeble to enlist attention, and must therefore be supplemented by such oddities as will appeal to a morbid curiosity. At least this, if not more. But I have reason to believe that some preachers practice such methods for the sake of gaining a personal notoriety for adroitness and skill; for it is not, by any means, every minister who can say, with the Apostle Paul, 'We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.' In all ages of the Church have been men loving to attain pre-eminence, and seeking power and place through the means of the Gospel ministry;—like selfish politicians, not coveting any post of danger or toil, but that of personal ease or glory. Now, we have need to understand that the Gospel was never intended to make any man mighty or

famous; but, on the contrary, to make all meek and lowly of heart, and to enlist every one in the work of saving souls, which can never be effected in the way of self-seeking, but only in that of self-sacrifice.

"Preaching is merely a means to this end, and is to be tried by its efficiency in promoting it. Whatever does not bear directly upon the conversion, purification, and instruction of men, as the medium of love toward God and men, may be good logic, science, or theology even; but it is not good preaching. We are first to aim at the regeneration of human nature, implanting therein the principle of true obedience, and then to show what obedience is to be rendered. Men are to be created anew, and then put into the way of a positive development of character extending through life.

"It is plain to me that you can not scold men into loving, or laugh them into loving, or trick them into loving, or draw them to it through mere curiosity. And so, in general, sarcastic denunciations, ferocious declamations, quirks or quips of manner, are out of place in a Christian pulpit,—although I do not deny that sometimes the evils and sins which prevent men from loving may be vehemently condemned; but always in a dignified style, and with a Christian temper

toward the sinner himself. There is but one way to induce love toward God; and that is, to convince men that God loves them. Says the apostle, 'We love him because he first loved us.'

"I concede that fancy and wit may occasionally have place in pulpit ministrations, in order to impart vividness to the promulgation of truth, and thus fix it in the minds of the hearers. But to announce beforehand that you are going to be witty, is to spoil the matter altogether."

"That is certain, Uncle Toby," said I. "Wit must be unexpected, or it is likely to lose its character. But do you not think it proper to hold out special inducements to secure men's attendance at church?"

"Can you paint the sunbeams, my boy? Can you add any thing, by puny inventions, to the brightness and glory of eternal truth? No, no; its best recommendation is itself. All ministers have to do is, to let it shine, unobstructed, but in its own inherent simplicity. Let them but preach it in due earnestness, and they will not want hearers. Like the light, the Gospel finds its own way, in accordance with its peculiar laws.

"If these new capers succeed, it seems to me their deviser will have much ground for self-congratulation, as the originator of a new motive

power, giving the Gospel an efficiency which otherwise it would not possess. And yet I have been taught that the personal operations of the Holy Spirit are the only instrumentality which can effect any thing at all; and assuredly he has an absolute right to select the mediums through which he will manifest himself to the heart; and, I doubt much, he has not either selected or adopted such schemes as these.

"To be sure, it is not needful that preachers be alike. Indeed, God never stereotypes any thing. Every species, and every individual thereof, is a new and revised edition, whether of plants, or animals, or men. And so, ministers are designed to possess a distinctive individuality, bearing upon the individuality of hearers. As, in all departments, we find individualities arranged in classes, it is not strange if each minister has a special adaptation to corresponding classes of minds.

"Furthermore, the Gospel drafts all instrumentalities into its service, and, of course, operates in strict accordance with the laws of our nature; that is, of our higher nature. None of the gifts of reasoning, eloquence, or genuine popularity, does it allow to run to waste. Whatever talents God dispenses are all to be directed to the same general purpose; and thus, by

uniformity in diversity, the great end of human salvation is to be finally secured."

I went to hear the sermon; but refused to take Lucy, being apprehensive, from the announcement, that something not remarkably chaste might be expected. The speaker chiefly devoted the time to a reeking denunciation of the newspapers, the editors of which seemed to regard it as a rich joke. Next morning, they gave a full synopsis of the discourse; and, instead of repenting of their misdeeds, they merely—laughed! And so ended the tremendous assault upon "The Carrion Crows of Society."

VII.

ON GREAT CITIES.

THE afternoon mail, one day, brought us a letter from my sister Mattie, who was spending the Summer with some friends in Baltimore, whence she was expected soon to return. Although such an event occurred at least once a week, yet the reception of the letter stirred us all up in a lively manner—especially as it very graphically described some interesting circumstances which had lately occurred in that city. But when it was read aloud to the family at the tea-table, a cloud of dissatisfaction passed over the usually vivacious countenance of my youngest sister Mary, or Molly, as we familiarly called her.

"What is the matter, Molly," inquired Lucy.

"Why," said she, "Bingtown is such a dull, stupid place, I wish we could live in Baltimore, or some large city, where we could see something, or somebody."

Of course, Lucy and my wife sympathized with the sentiments uttered. And as to myself, the mirage of an extensive city practice quivered along the horizon of my thoughts. Uncle Toby smiled, but said nothing. Molly, however, was not content without his explicit sanction, and therefore called for an expression of his opinion on the subject.

"Well, my dear," said he, "it is very natural that you should think so. And yet I judge you would not like a residence in a large city as well as you imagine; although, doubtless, you would enjoy the novelty of a visit, just as city folks enjoy the novelty of an occasional visit to the country. And, personally, I am very well satisfied to live in Bingtown."

"But why don't you think I would like a large city?" queried Molly.

"In the first place, because you are a lively little girl, and would not relish cooping very well. Here, you have a large grassy lot, and fine garden; besides a nice vacant lot or two, near by, where you can romp and run at pleasure. But, in a great city, the ground is too valuable to be used in this way. It requires there a large fortune to have any garden or yard at all attached to a residence. And as to sight-seeing, the ordinary events in a large city soon become

as humdrum and commonplace to a resident as are the every-day occurrences of Bingtown."

Molly looked thoughtful, as though she realized that this would indeed be a serious aspect of the case.

"Another reason is, that you are a sociable little girl; and your social feelings would often be deeply wounded by the neglect you would be sure to meet with. There, the solitude is, in general, almost as deep as that of the wilderness. It would take you many years to become as well acquainted with your neighbors as you are here, if, indeed, it would ever be possible."

"Why, Uncle Toby," cried Lucy, "you don't mean to say that the people of a great city are not sociable?"

"I do mean to say so, my dear; the cementing bond in a great city is not at all sociality, but merely trade. And so, it comes to pass, that men in business regard the swarming population simply as a source of revenue, and have, therefore, about as much social feeling for them as a dairyman has for his cows. And, likewise, wholesale dealers view the throngs of visitors in the same light. An entrance to the parlors is almost as difficult as an approach to the harem of an Oriental despot, until it can be effected by a golden key, for simple merit has no value.

"Probably, there is not a large city in the world where the social feeling prevails to any considerable extent. There is always what is called society; but it is based on something extrinsic to the manhood, such as wealth, or eminent position. It is not love which is sought, but glitter and display. And this sentiment pervades all classes—even ministers—quite generally. Of course, there is a profusion of politeness on all sides, when any thing is to be gained by it; but very little hearty, genuine, human sympathy. It would seem that the old adage 'Familiarity breeds contempt,' is here exemplified to its full extent. The constant sight of pushing crowds in the streets appears to erase all instinctively attractive influences toward man, just as vision becomes confused and dull both by too great nearness, and too great complicity of objects. It seems alike to be the case that where society is very scattered, or very compact, social sympathy becomes enfeebled or inoperative. In a great city, even men of the highest standing will pass, with the coolest indifference, a poor, crippled soldier trying to grind out a living with a street organ; and contribute nothing at all to his necessities. The squalid forms of human wretchedness are so common every day, that they become a matter of no concern or interest.

"Even church-going is apt to degenerate into a kind of formal and fashionable custom, with the comparatively few who do regularly attend—for be it remembered that empty pews are the rule in city churches, and full congregations the exceptions. Vital piety is a rare thing. And the sacredness of the Sabbath is sadly frittered away by yawning saloons, open drug-stores, cigar-shops, and such like; and by processions parading the streets with bands of music, and various other violations which could be named.

"The city, too, is always seething with pollution, and reeking with vice. Most of our cities are cesspools of corruption, rank and sickening. Outlaws flock thither, partly allured by the facilities of concealment, and partly, like others, by the superior chances of plying their business. Grog-shops, which are plentiful every-where, there concentrate, and almost crowd upon one another, pushing their dismal trade of ruin and death with most terrible success. If the awful wretchedness and crime of a single great city could be at once disclosed to view, we would not be able to look upon it, and would likely abhor the very name of city. There are many crimes, prevailing widely, of so revolting and horrid a character, that I would not even venture to name them in your hearing.

"And the numerous snares every-where spread in great cities to entangle the feet of the young and unwary, render life therein as dangerous as walking over ground filled with torpedoes. There is an agent of Satan, too, at every turn, who secures victims in great abundance, mainly among those who are attracted to the city by a hope of employment, not one-tenth of whom ever succeed in attaining their purpose. And the disappointed are ready for every plunderer—whether confidence men, or villainous employment agencies—and thus are often reduced to extreme distress. Besides, all kinds of seductive humbugs flourish. At the last Cincinnati Exposition, I was passing down Race Street, in that city, from the Industrial Buildings, when my attention was arrested by a string of circulars hanging at a certain door; and I plucked off one of them. I have it here in my pocket memorandum, and will read it to you, that you may have an example of the extraordinary schemes by which the people are hoaxed out of their money:

"'THE WONDERFUL CLAIRVOYANT AND PROPHET,

DR. Wm. W. COLECHESTER.

Whose Prophecies have excited the admiration and astonishment of the Eastern cities, is to be seen and consulted at his residence, north-west corner Race and George Streets, entrance 259 Race Street.

"'Professor Colechester has made a study of human character and human physiology, and though he has the power of prophecy, to a degree never possessed by any individual, he is not entirely unreliant upon his thorough comprehension of the science of our being and the influence of surrounding circumstances and objects upon us, when he renders us the subjects of his prophecy.

"'The professor divines with wonderful accuracy, the matrimonial future, present, and often the *fac-simile* of the being we are to wed. He unveils the future and tells us what store of fortune is reserved for us, and he has studied the mineral and animal kingdom, and found out the true source of the Chaldean faith in charms, and has collected from the Eastern world all the substances which were known by astronomers, fortune-tellers, and wise men of Asia and Persia to affect human life with success or misfortune. Professor Colechester is one of the few Clairvoyants of the modern age who is versed in all the sciences of the world of Prophecies.

"'Office Hours: From 9 A. M., until 9 P. M.'

"Now for cool impudence, and unblushing effrontery, I fancy that is hard to excel."

The girls were much amused with the wretched pretender's manifesto; and I mischievously asked, "Did you go in, Uncle Toby?"

He laughed, and replied, "No, my boy, the inducement was not strong enough. Yet I will warrant he made money fast. For it would seem that people, in general, dearly love to be humbugged, by even the most glaring pretensions. But the scamps must get along without my patronage."

"But, Uncle Toby," exclaimed my wife, "has the city no redeeming qualities?"

"Indeed, I can hardly say redeeming, although there are some counteracting influences at work worthy of great credit; although, comparatively speaking, they are feeble. Of these, I may name Churches, Public Schools, Christian Associations, Temperance Societies, Public Libraries, Industrial Expositions; but most of these are sadly neglected, as I have before intimated.

"Among humane institutions, the hospitals in the large cities of our country are, as a rule, most excellent, and, doubtless, the almshouses are generally well kept. And therein the extremely poor may sometimes find shelter, but at the expense of all they hold most dear—their families and social attachments. For the relief of the able-bodied persons who find it impossible to procure employment, among whom the great aggregate of suffering is, after all, to be found, there is absolutely no provision."

"But," I replied, "you do not forget how charitable were the great cities at the time of the Chicago fire."

"No, indeed; the promptness and liberality with which supplies were sent to the sufferers, from large and small cities, towns, villages, and country places, were gratifying in the highest

degree. Remember, I did not say that social sympathy is extinct in great cities, but only dormant, latent, or paralyzed; so that it requires startling events to arouse and stimulate it, and for every-day humanity it is as if it did not exist.

"Now, if my business interests required me to reside in a large city, I would certainly go thither, and do the best I could to keep my heart alive. Doubtless, in time, I could gather a circle of congenial friends around me. But while I am free to choose, I prefer to live in a small city, like Bingtown; because I want room, love sociality, and desire to shun the concentration of evil, and avail myself of the most efficient means of doing good.

"I have no doubt of the ultimate success of the Gospel in subduing wrong, all over the world. But I think the large cities will be the last strongholds of the enemy to be captured. It is now, as it was in the days of the Savior, when the kingdom of God could not be established in haughty Jerusalem, but had first to be planted in Galilee, and in the quiet, little town, Capernaum, standing on the lake-shore far away."

Bingtown very materially brightened up in the light of Uncle Toby's remarks, and we all felt well contented to remain where we were.

VIII.

ON PUBLIC PARKS AND FOUNTAINS.

THE next letter from Mattie gave an account of a visit she had just enjoyed to Druid Hill Park, a splendid piece of woodland, containing an area of eight hundred acres, near Baltimore; well laid out, and somewhat stocked with deer, ducks, geese, and white and black swans; and affording, from its highest portions of the surface, an extremely interesting and romantic view of the outskirts of the city, lying along an abrupt valley, and over irregular hill-sides. Uncle Toby, as well as the rest of us, was deeply engrossed by the vivacious description, for Mattie possesses a bright fancy, and moreover, a fresh, hearty appreciation of natural scenery, and can paint with words as well as pencil, in an admirable manner.

"Druid Hill is a very beautiful park," said Uncle Toby, "and is not merely an ornament to

Baltimore, but likewise a great practical benefit to the people, as Fairmont Park is to Philadelphia, and Central Park to New York. We, who, by going a few steps, can imbibe the fresh air of the country, and enjoy the natural contour of hills, dales, groves, forests, together with the cultivated fields, waving with grass, wheat, or corn, can hardly conceive how delightful and refreshing it is to the toilers of the great city, to leave the rattle of machinery, or the dust of the work-shop or factory, and go out among the shady trees in the park, and range the winding aisles with the step of conscious freedom. Then the currents of life seem to dance gaily through the veins, the mind is elevated, the heart filled with a bounding tide of joy, and even the fluttering leaves seem to whisper soothingly of guardian spirits near. I doubt not that it saves hundreds of lives every year, which otherwise would pine away within the monotonous lanes of brick walls, and among the distracting din of the streets and shops.

"It has been truly said that a bow always bent loses its spring; and, in like manner, the mind, and the muscles also, must have an occasional unbending, over and above what can be attained by sleep, or else the vital powers will become exhausted. Nature and art may be hap-

pily combined in effecting this end. The people of Cincinnati are justly proud of the Davidson Fountain, with its fine spacious esplanade, the gift of Mr. Probasco, to the city, for the free use of all its inhabitants. And in the Summer season, it is the daily, or, more especially, the nightly, resort of thousands of workmen, with their wives and children.

"Such appliances tend to diminish the desire for artificial amusements, and thus to preserve the mind in a more healthy tone. Where nearly every thing is artificial, nature alone, or combined with art, becomes as it were, a novelty, and so has the preference. And, then, this being afforded free of cost, and thus involving no oppressive self-sacrifice, the enticement is thereby enhanced still farther. And just so far as unchaste amusements are supplanted in this way, the morals of the people are necessarily improved in all respects.

"I think, too, there can be little doubt that the cultivation of an æsthetic taste leads to mental culture likewise. So that, in all ways possible, we should foster a love and appreciation of nature, and of the fine arts. And, accordingly, in this way, the Industrial Expositions throughout the country not only promote and stimulate industry, but invention as well, and their æsthetic

effect is not the least of their value and importance.

"But parks, especially, are an every-day recreation and refreshment, with their pure air, fine scenery, shrubs, trees, ponds, and rocks, to charm the eye, and soothe the aching head and heart. Every thing therein seems to tell of the boundless sympathy of the mysterious universe. The rush and roar are abandoned, peace and quiet intervene, as we wander among the stately trees; and the inward nature expands into a feeling of communion with the Creator. Even the most dull and unappreciative can hardly fail to catch some portion of the appropriate influence of the place, although he may be wholly unable to define it, or even know whence it comes. One needs not be competent to describe scenery in order to imbide its spirit, or receive its impress. We know that whenever a man is habitually conversant with particular circumstances or conditions of life, these are sure to stamp him with the peculiar type of character corresponding to their own nature, notwithstanding he may be, and generally is, wholly unconscious of it. For example, a mountaineer resembles the mountains around his home, and a hermit pioneer may easily be distinguished by his manner and appearance.

"If, then, we must have great cities, and this,

I suppose, is unavoidable, let us preserve around it as much of nature as possible. And that, too, in nature's own wild luxurious freedom, and not nicely trimmed and shorn and smoothed and arranged in rows, as if stiffened up for a military dress parade. Some rich men must have their parterres and lawns all marked by an artificial precision which exhibits only their want of good taste. They have a right, perhaps, to do as they please in this, but every one has a right to protest against spoiling public parks, in like manner, and insist upon the observance of the true harmony of nature and art. And then, let all the sons and daughters of toil, yea, and of wealth and fashion even, have a full opportunity of viewing themselves in nature's mirror, and of rejoicing, at least once in a while, under the parental benediction.

"As to the smaller cities, there is no trouble in preserving enough of natural scenery for all æsthetic uses. And yet there is a lamentable tendency in our country places to clip away the forests entirely, and transform every thing into bald, glaring landscapes. I was glad to observe the recent attempt of the Secretary of the Interior to raise the alarm, and put a stop to our wanton, wicked waste of timber lands. According to his estimate, fifty million acres of valuable

forest are annually destroyed in our country by fires and by the ax. At this rate, it will not take long to denude our lands completely; and, perhaps, so influence the climate as to put us in danger of sharing the fate of Persia, which is now suffering a dreadful famine caused by a long continued drought, supposed to have resulted from the waste of timber, by which its forests have all disappeared. Our destructive propensities ought to be arrested in this direction, without delay."

IX.

ON THE RICH.

AS I have before remarked in this history, my sister Mattie has a very vivid imagination. She is, also, exceedingly imitative; and therefore prone to catch the habits and manners of those with whom she is associated for any length of time—a part of which proneness comes, no doubt, from her guileless heart. So, it was not to be wondered at when, on her return from Baltimore, she brought certain city airs with her, which, however, were by no means offensive, but rather amusing to the family. One of these was a genuine city admiration for wealth and its possessors. She was, one evening, sitting by the window which overlooks Main Street, while the most of us still lingered at the tea-table, when she suddenly exclaimed:

"There! that 's the way to live. Dear me! it's a glorious thing to be rich. Now, that car-

riage is worth fifteen hundred dollars; and such splendid horses, too. They say Mr. Shupe is worth a million."

It was Mr. Shupe, driving out with his wife, which caused Mattie's enthusiasm.

"Uncle Toby," she continued, "I saw a man in Baltimore worth twenty million dollars. Just think of that!"

"Well, my dear," he replied, "do you suppose it made him happy, or miserable?"

"Why, Uncle Toby, how you talk! Happy, of course; for he had all that heart could wish. He lived in a magnificent mansion, with a marble front, and a beautiful yard well filled with shrubbery. And there were two fine fountains, and several statues; and every thing was truly splendid, I assure you."

"And so, my dear, from these things, you conclude he must, without question, have been happy. And, therefore, it will surprise you yet more when I tell you that I am quite sure being rich, and having all that heart can wish, is far more likely to confer misery than true happiness."

"Why, Uncle Toby!" she gasped; and, in her bewilderment, could add no more.

"I have the highest authority for my belief on this point; for the Savior himself judged it needful to admonish his hearers: 'Take heed,

and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.' And almost every day we see abundant illustrations, all around us, of the truth of this precept. How often do we read of what is called 'scandal in high life!' How often do we learn of the troubles, and even separation, of wealthy families! How bitterly do wealthy parents frequently find themselves compelled to exclaim, with King Lear:

> 'How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is,
> To have a thankless child!'

How often do we see the sons of rich men wasting the substance their fathers have so industriously accumulated, through fast living; being wild, dissolute, licentious, or else, on the other hand, mere useless drones, effeminate, and

> 'As idle as a painted ship,
> Upon a painted ocean;'

living for naught, and dying unlamented!

"But do not misunderstand me. As a means, I value wealth very highly; but, as an end, it is most despicable. Of itself, it can not confer either enjoyment or respectability. Contrariwise, it corrodes the heart like a canker. It can not heal a wounded breast; it can not satisfy the earnest aspirations of the immortal spirit.

"It is plain, too, that, beyond a certain contracted limit, it can not purchase even the satisfying of our wants. After the physical necessities are supplied by its means, its power is usually gone. A very wealthy citizen of New York, being congratulated on his possessions by a friend, silently pointed to a pile of notes, bonds, leases, deeds, etc., lying on his desk, and then asked: 'Would you be willing to take charge of all the property represented by those documents and papers for your food and clothing?' 'No, indeed,' replied his friend; 'I think that would be a hard bargain.' 'It 's all I get,' was the plaintive answer. And what a lesson is here! It is said, also, that this man of wealth is now leading a life of alarm and apprehension, lest he should, like Mr. Nathan, be murdered on account of his riches—terrified, probably, by the impenetrable mystery which still surrounds the Nathan murder, notwithstanding all the efforts which have been made to discover the perpetrator of the dark and bloody deed. For, in this instance, the old adage, 'Murder will out,' seems sadly at fault.

"From the Sacred Scriptures, we learn how it was with an eminent man named Haman, who was advanced to great wealth and honors by the King of Persia. An apparently trivial incident

was quite sufficient to poison all his enjoyment. When he told his wives of the brilliant fortunes which had fallen to his lot, he pensively added, 'But all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai, the Jew, sitting at the king's gate.' And I think he was by no means an exception in this matter, but merely a type of human nature itself. Not long since, a judge in New York was impeached, and convicted upon the impeachment. Pending the trial, he declared his intention, in case of an adverse result, of settling down and enjoying his acquired wealth in a life of ease and luxury. But his riches failed to brace him up as he had expected. He staggered and fell; and, on his death-bed, mournfully said to his son, 'My son, they have broken my heart.' And so it was.

"Then, notwithstanding the estimate of the world on the possession of wealth, it is not indispensable to human happiness, and indeed is scarcely desirable. This is plain, from the consideration that very few, comparatively speaking, are ever able to attain it. Unlike man, God places the blessings of the highest value within the reach of all; as, for example, light, air, food, drink, and, we may add, those spiritual gifts which are essential to our salvation. But there is not one in a thousand who can become

wealthy. And those thus excluded are, doubtless, in the main, happier without than they would be with riches.

"And, besides, those who are reputed men of fortune are always apt to labor under an apprehension of losing their possessions by overtrading, or by some form of calamity. How did the great Chicago fire, in thousands of instances, sweep away, as in a moment, the accumulations of a life-time! The foundering of a ship at sea, the failure of debtors, the rush of a commercial crisis, or injudicious investments, may involve the utter destruction of all the boasted fabrics of gilded fortune. Indeed, from various causes, wealth rarely descends farther than to the third generation."

Just here, as Uncle Toby was balancing his spoon on the cup before him, according to his usual manner, by some mishap the cup was slipped out of the saucer, and fell upon the floor, breaking in several pieces. The accident did not seem to disconcert him in the least; but, casting his eye toward the fragments lying scattered around in illustration of the vanity of all worldly things, as if to point the moral of what he had been saying, he continued his discourse without any allusion to the occurrence; although, next day noon, he placed upon the table, without note

or comment, a whole set of cups and saucers like those to which the broken cup belonged.

"At the best, there is an hour rapidly approaching when we must leave it all behind; and then we shall want something permanent to rely upon. As it was with Sir Walter Scott, on his dying bed, when he exclaimed, addressing his son-in-law: 'John, bring me the book.' 'The book! what book?' he inquired. 'Can you ask? There is but one!' said the expiring man. So, in that final hour, shall we feel the vanity of all below. Only one kind of riches will then avail to console the heart and supply the necessities of the soul. 'We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out,' says the apostle. How foolish is it then to spend our time in distracting anxiety to heap up around us that which we can not use on our journey, nor when we reach our destination. It would be as wise in a traveler to toil along under a burden of glittering sand, which, from time to time, he is still increasing, to no purpose, now or hereafter, except to fatigue him more and more as he advances.

"So much, then, for the value of riches, in themselves. But, furthermore, their natural influence on the mind and heart is pernicious. It ought to be plain that their possession is no

proper criterion by which to judge a man; and yet men are habitually estimated in this way. And the habit has even passed into our current forms of speech. We say such a man is *worth* so much; as though a man's worth is measured by his property. And yet some of the most graceless, worthless men that ever lived have abounded in wealth. It is not strange, therefore, that a rich man is prone to become vain, and puffed up with a sense of his own importance; and, accordingly, to demand a much greater deference to his opinions and desires than they are entitled to by virtue of their inherent wisdom. He is likely to be impatient of contradiction, supercilious, and overbearing to those of inferior position; and, in all respects, to act as an autocrat by natural right, tyrannically spurning restraint. St. James, remonstrating against invidious distinctions between the rich and poor, and the tendency to respect the person of the former because of their wealth, pertinently asks, 'Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment-seats?' The Savior declared, with reference to the young ruler, that it is impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God; and for the plain reason that every man is required to do virtually what the ruler was required to do actually, and is apt to be as unwilling as

he. They who have riches must become as those who have them not; namely, by an unreserved consecration thereof. And, alas! it is to be feared that many, who do comply with these inflexible conditions, afterward withdraw the gift from the altar, and thereby forfeit their standing in the divine favor. It is not on the peaks of the highest mountains, although the glittering pinnacles of ice there flash back the unobstructed sunbeams, that we find vegetation flourishing, but nearer the base, and especially in the vales beneath. So, it is not where the blazing sunlight of prosperity falls upon an elevated social position that the Christian graces are found in their fair development, but, rather, in lowly stations of the earth.

"And yet I must not do injustice to the noble few, who, with humble and true hearts, constantly devote all they are and all they have to the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. Thus, the Savior admonished his disciples: 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations.' You have, my dears, every reason to rejoice that your noble-hearted father not only has a competency, but is justly renowned and loved in the community for his genuine, unaffected goodness and

beneficence. And I trust you will all aid him gladly, by voluntarily denying yourselves every needless indulgence, that he and you may have the more to expend in the delightful work of cultivating the vineyard of the Lord. And never envy any one the possession of wealth; but let it ever be your earnest desire that all who attain it may be diligent and faithful stewards of the divine bounty, and thus be truly happy himself, and make all those happy who dwell around him."

The reference to our almost idolized father effectually clinched the argument. None of us had recovered from the harmless childish delusion of his absolute infallibility—nor do we wish to do so at any time. The girls showed their appreciation by kissing him and Uncle Toby, who had paid him the handsome compliment, in turn. He himself seemed decidedly abashed by the unexpected tribute, being as modest as he is kind. But, then, he can not possibly be spoiled by flattery; and Uncle Toby, knowing this, always takes especial delight in every fitting opportunity of passing upon him delicate and deserved compliments, both in his presence and absence. They are mutually proud of each other, and of their brotherly relationship.

X.

ON THE POOR.

MATTIE and Lucy are active members of the Dorcas Society in Bingtown; and, in company with Jennie Bryan and my wife, had spent the afternoon of a certain day visiting some very destitute families of the city. We were highly gratified by their accounts of what they were doing, and of the industry and efficiency of the society to which they belonged. Uncle Toby spoke very warmly in praise of the work and the workers, which greatly pleased the ladies, who always place an exalted estimate on his encomiums, in every thing. He never fails to have a good word for any one engaged in a good work, and possesses the happy faculty of saying the right word in precisely the right place.

"It is surprising," he continued, "what prominence is given in the New Testament to the peculiar privileges of the poor, and the corre-

sponding obligation of the rich respecting them, and yielding them all their rights. 'Blessed are ye poor,' said the Savior himself, 'for yours is the kingdom of heaven.' And when John the Baptist from the prison sent two disciples to inquire concerning his mission, he returned the answer by charging the messengers to tell John what miracles they had witnessed; and added, as the crowning evidence, that to the poor the Gospel was preached. St. James, in urging the claims of the poor to personal respect, by way of argument, asks, 'Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?' And Christ teaches, most plainly, that the foremost test in the judgment-day will be the treatment of the poor during the present life. Although the passage is familiar, I will read it to you, so that you may think of it in this point of view:

"'Then shall the King say unto them on his right-hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an-hungered and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came

unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an-hungered, and fed thee; or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in; or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

"'Then shall he say also unto them on the left-hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an-hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an-hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee! Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.'

"Now, plainly, the principle of this passage is that Christ—accepted or rejected in the persons of his destitute followers—is to be the standard of reward or condemnation. And may

this, in part at least, explain the cause of so many of God's children being in destitute circumstances? They are here, it may be, to represent their Savior's lowliness and poverty, and to serve as a test of character and loyal submission on the part of their affluent brethren.

"The duty of contributing to the wants of the poor has its difficulties, as most other duties have. In relieving the worthy poor, even, you will find as much, or more, depends upon the manner as upon the matter of giving. We must respect their delicacy of feeling. If we give to them mechanically, or officially, or with the air of conferring a condescending favor, we shall pain them deeply, and cancel our right to a reward.

"'It is more blessed to give than to receive,' the Savior said; but it is only so when we give with a proper spirit of love and humility. It is not at all the act of giving, but the character of it, which guarantees the blessedness.

"But in our giving, we have to do not only with the Lord's poor, but often with the unthankful and the evil, even the vicious and abandoned. Many have reduced themselves to the depths of want by wicked courses of life. And we not unfrequently find their families rude and degraded in character, as well as condition.

Every man for himself is the motto; and if one is so miserable as to fall in the street, he must expect to be trampled under foot by the rushing crowds chasing after mammon. It is a terrible truth that the fortunes of many rich nabobs are derived largely from the oppression of widows and orphans. You know that Hood's poem, entitled 'The Song of the Shirt,' graphically portrays the dreadful distress of needle-women. Mrs. Browning also has depicted the sorrows of the overwrought poor of England, in her admirable poems. But all such appeals seem to be in vain—indeed, they rarely are read by those to whom they are addressed, and who are not inclined to spend their precious time in poring over sentimental poems when they ought to be engaged in crushing the life-blood out of the destitute for their own selfish advantage! Should they read, they would pass by the moving lines with a smile of contempt. Nothing is accomplished, except the writer's duty of protest in behalf of humanity."

And here Uncle Toby, under the impulse of his indignation, arose and left the room.

XI.

ON THE TREATMENT OF CRIME.

ONE Sunday afternoon Uncle Toby went to assist in holding a religious meeting with the prisoners at the county jail. At tea time, the conversation chiefly turned upon the value of such services, and of all attempts to reform such as are branded as outlaws by community. Mattie, especially, held to the opinion that, in almost every instance, the efforts to that end were completely thrown away, and took up time which could be spent much more profitably elsewhere.

"Well, my dear," said Uncle Toby, "all are not outlaws who are in prison, not even all those who are justly accused. I believe the majority of the crimes which are punished (for the great rogues usually go free) are committed, as it were, unconsciously—some under a sudden impulse of passion or temptation, and very many under the pressure of want, or the insanity of drunkenness.

And when these exciting causes are removed, as they are in prison, we can, perchance, reach the inner man, and induce profitable reflection. Even in a case of murder, although the life of the criminal is justly forfeited, we are not authorized to withhold our aid to bring him, if possible, to repentance before God. So far as we are concerned, we ought to do what we can for the salvation of the vilest sinner, as long as probation lasts and he will turn a listening ear to us. If he then finally rejects, we, at least, are clear of his blood. We have no right to decide upon any one's ultimate destiny. Pope's lines contain a salutary caution on this point:

'Let not this weak and erring hand,
Presume thy bolts to throw;
And deal damnation round the land,
On each I judge thy foe.'

"Accordingly, the methods of punishment by the State ought never to of be a vindictive character, nor be based upon the assumption that prisoners have forfeited all the rights of humanity. A penitentiary ought to make good its title, by adapting all its regulations to the work of producing genuine repentance and reformation. Dungeons should be wholly abolished, as well as all whippings, and like degradations. Such an institution ought to be, indeed, as much designed

to promote a moral restoration, as a lunatic asylum is to effect the mental recovery of its inmates. Only one punishment not reformatory should exist; namely, capital punishment for murder. And even here, we ought to have a due regard to humanity and decency, and it is my opinion that the disgusting process of hanging should be set aside for some such mode as the French guillotine. And all executions of a capital sentence should be excluded from the promiscuous public gaze."

"Surely, you do not believe in capital punishment," suggested Lucy.

"For murder, I certainly do; and think we have no discretion in the matter, because God has peremptorily commanded it, in charging Noah, as the head of the second world and progenitor of all nations, with these words: 'At the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. . . . . Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.'"

"But that is in the Old Testament," replied Lucy, "and the Jewish civil law is not our standard, is it, Uncle Toby?"

"It is true, the distinctive Jewish code is not our standard; but then this precept is not a part of it. The Jews recognized its obligations, of

course, and it was specifically enjoined upon them in the divine law, as one of the nations for whom it was originally designed. But we must remember that it was given to Noah, as the second father of the whole human race, just as the precept of marriage was delivered to Adam as the first ancestor of the family of man, and it has never been repealed. It was not, either, a mere regulation, but a positive requirement, prefaced with these emphatic words: 'And surely your blood of your lives will I require. At the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man.' Besides, consider the reason given, which is not peculiar to any nation, but of universal application, 'for in the image of God made he man;' that is to say, Murder is a malicious design to destroy the image of God in man. And for this profound and unchanging reason, a murderer, to the remotest ages, is to expiate his sacrilegious crime by his own violent death.

"And, still further, the precept stands in direct connection, without the least mark of distinction in regard to the extent or perpetuity of the obligation, with another precept which the apostles and elders assembled in council at Jerucalem solemnly pronounced to be universally binding; namely, that concerning the eating of blood.

"Wherever this precept against murder is habitually disregarded, I think the results will be found inevitably disastrous, as are all public violations of a specific divine law. Not only do the instincts of its necessity lead even men of influence and respectability to sanction mobs who break open jails and execute summary vengeance upon murderers there confined (which, of course, ought to be discouraged by every available means); but also human life becomes cheapened in value, and murders are more frequent than when the precept is enforced in good faith. If it were known that courts and juries would not shelter the murderer through a maudlin sympathy, but would sternly carry out the spirit of the divine law in this regard, under the rightful authority of the State, mobs would cease to burst prison doors, and murder would be greatly restrained.

"But, to return to reformatory punishment and prison discipline. Solitary confinement should seldom be resorted to, meals should be taken together in a common dining-room, and religious services held in like manner; there should be an active, pious chaplain, and a well selected library, and all available means and appliances brought to bear which would tend to enlighten the mind and cultivate the hearts of the convicts.

"Some, of course, would be utterly incorrigible, but the general result would be satisfactory. The excellent chaplain of the Illinois Penitentiary, at this time, has three hundred of the prisoners organized into a kind of Church fellowship, nearly all of whom he believes to be soundly converted. This is nearly one-fourth of the convicts, so that it would appear from this example that there may be proportionately more genuine Christians inside than outside a penitentiary. Not long since, one of my friends visited that institution, and spent a Sabbath there. He was much encouraged by what he saw and heard. One colored prisoner said to him, 'I am here for life, and never expect to be released. I am innocent, and was convicted for another man's crime. But I thank God that I was ever sent here. It was the means of converting my soul, and I am happy in a Savior's love.' Probably I have not stated his exact language, but this was substantially his testimony. And how enrapturing to the heart of the faithful chaplain to have such seals to his ministry! Also, seven hundred inmates of that institution voluntarily united in an earnest remonstrance to the Legislature against the repeal of the recently enacted liquor law, then violently assailed by the traffickers in alcoholic poisons.

"One of the great defects of our prison system is, that, on the expiration of his term, a prisoner is turned out into the wide world with scarcely any money, and little chance of obtaining employment, however sincerely he may have resolved to lead a new life. From this circumstance, many become discouraged, fall into crime, and are soon under sentence again. And then the wise and generous public, standing aloof and withholding all relief and assistance, sneer at schemes of prison reformation! When I was last in Cincinnati, I met, in the Christian Association Rooms, a Petition to the Ohio Legislature, which I regard as a movement in the right direction. I brought a copy home with me, which reads as follows:

"'PETITION.

"'*To the General Assembly of the State of Ohio:*

"'Your petitioner have their attention called to what seems to be a practical defect in the present system of discipline for our State Penitentiary. Believing that, without any detriment to penal legislation, the system may be so amended as to be of great advantage to society and to the State, they would respectfully submit the subject to your serious consideration.

"'Your petitionerss represent that every year a large number of convicts are discharged from that institution in a penniless condition. They return to society under the stigma of crime. To make new friends and find honest employment, at once, is practically an almost hopeless

task. Distrusted, without means of support, and pressed by hard necessities, in many cases, it is thought, they are almost compelled to resort to theft and other vicious habits of life. The prison "fund for over work" seems inadequate, and benevolent and charitable associations are only able to reach exceptional cases.

"'And your petitioners represent that a large number of the discharged convicts are young men, not incorrigibly vicious, who, under a wise policy, might become good citizens and useful members of society. Of the whole number now in that institution, about one-third are not over twenty-one years of age, and more than two-thirds are under thirty years of age. During the year ending with October 31, 1869, the receipts of said penitentiary, for convict labor, were more than $32,000 in excess of the expenses of the institution.

"'Wherefore your petitioners pray that such legislation may be had in the premises, as shall secure to well disposed convicts a greater money equivalent for their labor, to be paid out of the profits of the institution; to their families, when necessitous, a portion might be paid, and the remainder to themselves after discharge, under judicious restrictions. We feel sure that such a provision would tend to prevent crimes, encourage reformation, and accomplish greater good than could arise from any profits in money now accruing from convict labor.

"'Your petitioners humbly request your thoughtful attention to this subject, and your early action thereon.'"

"I think, brother Toby," said my father at this point, "that the plan called the Irish System is worthy of close attention, if not of complete adoption. As I am informed, it is organized something like a graded school; and the convicts

may not only have their terms shortened materially by good behavior, but may also secure promotion thereby into the second, and finally the third grade, whence they are dismissed with a certificate of their standing. And it is said that this class are much sought after as laborers in various departments, because they have been tested and found true in the prison."

"Brother Tommy," replied Uncle Toby, "that looks to me like a very feasible plan. Of course, any change would, at first, involve difficulties, as important changes always do. But a reform in this matter is imperatively necessary, and may be accomplished, if we can move our legislatures to efficient action in the premises. But legislative bodies are proverbially slow at getting at any thing out of the groove in which it has been accustomed to run, however desirable it may be to do so.

"A very large proportion of crimes could be prevented by relieving the distresses of the poor. I said once, in your hearing, that there is a poverty resulting from crime; and now I say that there is crime resulting from poverty. In damp cellars, amid filth, destitution, and abandoned wretchedness, the mind and body become depraved, the moral faculties lose their restraining energies, a sense of loneliness fills the heart, and,

in his desperation, the man is ready for any crime which may promise relief. And besides this, many resort to strong drink in order to drown their feeling of misery and hopelessness, and then they are led into the depths of vice, partly by their frenzy, partly by artful seducers. Be it remembered, that about three-fourths of all the crimes punished in our prisons originate in drunkenness, and that a large proportion of drunkenness is caused by the goading anxieties and crushing wants of extreme poverty, and then we can form some idea how greatly a prompt and adequate relief of the helpless poor would prevent many crimes which otherwise seem inevitable."

My father replied, "That is a most just and generous sentiment, Brother Toby, and it places the responsibility of crime where, in great measure, it properly belongs, upon the want of charity for the unfortunate members of society. The community drives its victims to desperation, and then punishes in them the results of its own wrong. God grant that we may speedily behold the day when all shall recognize the momentous truth that we are, severally and jointly, the keepers of our brethren!"

"Amen!" responded Uncle Toby, and here the conversation on this interesting topic ended.

XII.

ON PUBLIC ASYLUMS.

ONE evening, Uncle Toby brought home with him a copy of the New York *Tribune*, which contained, in part, a detailed account of the adventures of a correspondent who had voluntarily had himself incarcerated in a lunatic asylum, in order to gain an opportunity of inspecting the interior management of the institution. His narrative revealed the most revolting cruelties habitually practiced upon the unfortunate inmates, and awakened a deep interest in the community at large—more especially among those who had relatives in the asylum as patients. Uncle Toby read portions of the account, and then commented upon the whole subject, as follows:

"Public asylums for paupers, orphans, and the insane, when under proper management, are noble charities, only to be found in Christian lands; and, indeed, confined to distinctively Protestant

nations. But they may be fearfully abused, and sometimes—although, I think, not generally—they are so abused. They stand in need of closer inspection, and more thorough care, on the part of governments having jurisdiction over them.

"As to the means employed in the present instance, by the New York *Tribune*, these can not, according to my judgment, be approved on moral grounds; for the correspondent could not possibly work his way as a spy into the asylum without much willful deception, if not positive falsehood; and we are explicitly forbidden to do evil that good may come. 'The end justifies the means,' is a fundamental maxim of Jesuitism, but one subversive of all good faith, and flatly opposed to the teachings and spirit of the Holy Scriptures.

"However, the disclosures themselves show the absolute necessity of a legal system of faithful and vigorous espionage. Cruelty ought to be made practically impossible; and so, public carelessness is utterly inexcusable. The abuses detailed in the *Tribune* do not appear to be denied by the managers; but merely excused on the ground that they were committed by subordinates, without the knowledge of the authorities in the asylum. I presume this is a true state-

ment of the matter; but, then, it is the proper business of these men, to whom are intrusted the interests of the unfortunate patients, decidedly to know whatever is going on in and about the institution. The apology, therefore, really adds to the offense; for so paltry an explanation is an insult to public sentiment and common humanity. Let us have no more of it; but let men be appointed to a trust so vitally important who are both competent and faithful.

"One of the most startling features of the case is the facility with which sane men can be incarcerated in such institutions. The correspondent of the *Tribune*, as it appears, was enjoying sound health of body and mind; and yet was admitted on a certificate of insanity, under the signature of several eminent physicians, and indorsed by the judge without evidence or examination. Several years ago, Mrs. Packard, a very intelligent woman, was imprisoned by a malicious husband in the Illinois Insane Hospital, where she was compelled to remain a long time, until finally released on a writ of *habeas corpus*. She afterward published a volume making full revelations, and brought the matter so forcibly to the attention of the Legislature of the State, as to induce an immediate change in the law, greatly tending to prevent a

repetition. According to her narrative, the cruelties in her case were not confined to subordinates. And in the same State, about the same time, I believe, it was discovered that the brutal keeper of the county poor-house, in Shelby County, had been in the habit of inflicting the most horrible barbarities on the paupers under his care. There seems to be in human nature a disposition to exercise tyranny, which requires a strong guard when men are placed in any position of despotic authority. It is not a mere fanciful sentiment of the poet, that man,

> 'Dressed in a little brief authority, . . .
> Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven,
> As make the angels weep.'

"Nothing can prevent abuse but the utmost care and circumspection in the choice of both officers and subordinates in these institutions. Those who have not a wise head, a feeling heart, and the most unwearying patience, are wholly unfit for their places. There are many wayward inmates, both of poor-houses and insane asylums; and one who possesses but little self-control will often be provoked to employ violence—which, however, only makes matters worse on both sides. We perceive, then, how pernicious is the present system of appointments, which pays very slight regard to moral qualifications. In pauper

asylums, the care of the establishments is often farmed out to the lowest bidder, who has a consequent right to exact all he can from the labor of those under his charge. And herein is an almost direct bribe to the practice of inhumanity.

"It is to be hoped that the disclosures which have been laid before the people will effect a radical reform in the management of all our State charities, so that these shall be as noble in their practical operation as in their original design."

XIII.

ON THE GOLDEN RULE IN BUSINESS.

"IT sometimes appears to me," I one day remarked to Uncle Toby, in the course of conversation, at the table, "that what we call the Golden Rule has but little practical value—at least, in matters of business. It may, and doubtless does, have much force and beauty as a sentiment; but I have never yet seen any one, however eminent as a Christian, who did not prefer himself and his family to all others, in every-day pursuits. And I can not see how, in the present state of things, it could possibly be otherwise. In business transactions, men must represent their own interests, in direct contrast with those of the opposite party. Now, how would I get along in my profession, should I attempt to conduct both sides of a cause? And how would a Christian general succeed in war, if he were to try to command both of the contending armies? And so,

in bargaining. Again: suppose I were poor and embarrassed, and my neighbor were rich, I might desire that he should divide with me. Would he be under obligation, by the Golden Rule, to do it? Would not this be socialism? And is socialism really enjoined by the Scriptures? Or, if I were a prisoner, I certainly would desire that some one would set me at liberty. Must I, therefore, go about breaking open jails, and freeing the prisoners therein confined? Should I attempt it, would I not very speedily become an inmate myself of some such place, on a charge of destroying the public peace and security?

"I have heard the kindred precept, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' thus explained: 'We love ourselves so well as to do no violence to our persons, our property, or our reputation, and to do ourselves all the good we can. Therefore, we should act thus toward our neighbors.' True enough, no doubt; but yet so indefinite as to amount to nothing, practically, in settling the question, How can we carry into effect the principle of the Golden Rule, and of the Second Gospel Commandment, in the details of business life?"

Uncle Toby whereupon replied:

"Your perplexity is very natural, my boy, and your question one of the utmost importance. It

deserves to be plainly and carefully answered. You say truly that men necessarily prefer their own families. This is Scriptural; and the apostle has expressly declared, 'He that provideth not for his own, and especially for them of his own household, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.' Here is a clear distinction and preference, not only authorized, but emphatically enjoined. Nor are we required to throw away our efforts and money, in the vain wish of taking every man out of debt, or of releasing all prisoners. Neither do the Scriptures prescribe socialism; but, on the contrary, recognize distinctively the poor and the rich, even among Christians. Thus, St. Paul admonishes Timothy: 'Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come; that they may lay hold on eternal life.'

"What, then, is the true intent of the Golden Rule, applied to the practical duties of life? In determining this question, we must not look at the precept detached, but as forming part of an ethical system; and, therefore, to be interpreted

in accordance with the whole range of precepts and principles therein contained. Again, we must consider to whom it was, and is now, addressed; and whom, therefore, it was intended to guide. Beyond question, the Savior designed it for the guidance of his disciples especially, who are required to partake of his spirit of self-sacrifice, humility, and love, and to share his views of human life, in all its dependencies and relationships. And by this spirit, and these views, the Christian's desires, in every thing, are to be regulated. He is always to act, not merely with reference to his own advantage, but to the divine glory; and hence to be contented with the allotments of the divine providence. Now, we may ask, what would such a person, possessing such a character, and actuated by such motives, desire that men should do to him? He could have no selfish wishes; but, if need be, would willingly suffer for the welfare of others, and for the general benefit of mankind, according to the will of God. He desires, however, all spiritual blessings for himself, and a preparation for the kingdom of heaven. Hence, he desires them, also, for others. He would desire to receive from his fellow-men whatever would really help him in the great purpose of his life, such as sympathy, brotherly love, instruction, and encouragement.

Hence, he is to afford these also, as opportunity serves, to them. And, as to business, we may desire that our brethren would help us along, not only by relieving us when we are in actual distress, but by throwing facilities in our way, whenever they can without detriment to themselves. Then, we should do the same toward them. And, doubtless, this is, at least in part, what the apostle meant when he said, 'Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others;' and, again, 'Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.' And, in bargaining, we must consider both sides, and adjust the balance justly and generously. We would not that others should take advantage of our mistakes, or ignorance, or necessities; but the contrary. And so we ought to treat them. And, in regard to your profession, a man who feels the obligation of the Golden Rule will not take advantage, by quibbles or legal technicalities; but will always have cases tried upon their merits, and by a fair, open, honest investigation."

"But what," I interrupted, "if our opponents will not reciprocate in this matter?"

"Well, let them bear the responsibility. It is certainly not your business to meet dishonest practices with trickery; nor repel fraud

by answering fraud. And, in the long run, I do not think it is the tricksters who generally succeed best.

"All bargaining ought to be to the mutual advantage of both sides. Doctor Wayland, in his 'Political Economy,' illustrates this so plainly and simply that I shall borrow his remark, in substance, which runs thus: Suppose a hungry man, having some money, enters a bakery to purchase a loaf. The exchange is made: the hungry man has the bread; and the baker has the money. Both are richer by the transaction, so that neither would wish to reverse it again.

"The world, even, recognizes certain principles of morals, or honor, as it is usually termed; and so, boards of trade are careful to expel or punish any member thereof who deals unfairly, according to the established standards. Here, then, is a requirement of worldly policy, that men shall restrain themselves in dealing, and look fairly on both sides in making contracts. And this is, in a lower degree, the very obligation of the Golden Rule enforced; and we may, therefore, justly infer that it possesses the highest practical value."

I replied:

"You have entirely removed my difficulties

in this matter, Uncle Toby; and I am heartily glad I brought the question forward; because, heretofore, it has caused me much perplexity as to its bearing on business life."

XIV.

ON MISSION WORK.

OUR minister devoted a certain Sabbath exclusively to the mission cause. In the forenoon, the audience was addressed by a missionary just returned from China on a visit, and then by a Chinese convert in his own language, interpreted by the missionary. The evening appointment was in behalf of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society.

While we were at dinner, Molly, who had appeared to be in a brown study, suddenly exclaimed:

"I think holding two missionary meetings in one day is going it pretty strong."

We all smiled audibly at the explosive remark, and Mattie rejoined:

"Better make a business of it, I suppose, and be done with it at once. It seems to me, at any rate, the proper course would be to get people

converted at home, before we go chasing after the heathen abroad."

"Don't you think," said Uncle Toby, "the better way is to carry on both together; especially as we have both laborers enough, and money enough, if we can only enlist them in the service? It is, however, possible that the attention paid to foreign missions is in advance of the progress made at home, and is therefore somewhat disproportionate. About twenty years ago, an English writer emphatically—and, it may be, justly—censured the one-sided labor in this regard which he thought then existed. Mattie's remark has recalled the passage to my mind. I will get the book in the library, and read it to you. The author says:

"'The working-men, in large towns, enfold men of every variety of religious opinion and profession. The greater part of them, as might be expected, professedly belong to the Established Church; and nine-tenths of these are the individuals who make up nearly the whole of that immense body who never enter a church or chapel, nor hear a sermon once in ten years. Among the denizens of the workshop, to dissent is at least to have the character of being religious, to a certain extent; while to belong to the Established Church is, too often, to have a character for no religion at all. The marked distaste for the inside of a church, which these professed adherents to the religion of the State display, may well arise from the fact that Christianity, as it is there offered to their acceptance, assumes a garb and an attitude which are

offensive to them. When the working-man contrasts the cushioned pew, in which the fat cit snores at his ease, and pursy respectability reclines so comfortably swaddled, with the cold, damp stones and narrow, hard bench proffered for the accommodation of his weary limbs, he looks upon the whole affair as a kind of scurvy joke, in which, the laugh being all against himself, he declines to take a part. On the subject-matter of Christianity, he is often as ignorant as a Blackfoot Indian; and, indeed, in this respect, is precisely on a level with his clodhopping brother who stumbles at the plow-tail. He knows nothing either of its doctrines or its history, and has no more idea of what the Reformation effected than an Esquimaux has of the Eleusinian Mysteries. When, at a period which there is no great risk in presuming to be not far off, England shall be again spiritually subjected to the Roman Pontiff, there will be no necessity for any Jesuitical perversion of the million masses that compose the industrial army. The vast majority of them are, at the present moment, every whit as good Catholics as they are Protestants, without knowing it. The wisdom that should have enlightened them has been hauled on shipboard, and transported beyond seas, to illuminate the savages and cannibals of Polynesia and New Zealand. It is so much more gratifying to our favorite phase of Christian philanthropy, to behold a converted cannibal jabbering and grimacing on a missionary platform, than it is to see a fellow-countryman rescued from the slough of ignorance and vice, that we send thousands of talented men, and hundreds of thousands of money, on a journey to the antipodes, to prevent Quackoo from griddling his grandmother, while Peggy Styles, at home, poisons Big Bob, her husband, for the sake of four pound ten—which we are content to denominate a very shocking procedure, and say no more about it. It will be no proof of the soundness of this economy, even should the bulwarks of the Protestant faith be found

in Australia or New Zealand, when its outworks are assailed at home.'

"A good deal of English spirit in that, I should say, and some exaggerated description. But the evil it depicts is not unreal, although it is, I think, rapidly disappearing, or, at least, diminishing. For, in our country, since the establishment of a successful mission at Five Points, in the city of New York, the outskirts and waste places of our cities, great and small, have been receiving considerable attention from zealous Christian workers organizing Sunday-schools and mission Churches with good success. But very much more could be accomplished, if more money were expended, and more time given to the needful work.

"In our Church, we have a new branch of mission enterprise, called the Church Extension Society, which promises results of great importance in our own country, by aiding to build churches in destitute regions.

"There is, also, a non-sectarian missionary organization, having for its especial object the dissemination of Gospel knowledge and influence among Roman Catholics, here and abroad. It reports the conversion of thirty thousand Catholics, through its instrumentality, within the past ten years; which is, indeed, highly gratifying.

It has a fine hold in Italy, Spain, and Mexico, and is evidently destined to accomplish much toward the disenthrallment of the deluded victims of Romish superstition every-where.

"The recent missionary auxiliary in our Church, called the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, if well managed, can not fail to become a most powerful agency. Its particular design is to send women, as teachers, to heathen lands, where they can reach their own sex in the deep seclusion of pagan homes, which no male missionary ever can do. I trust we shall have a very interesting and profitable meeting to-night in this behalf.

"The foreign missions of the various Churches have been, for many years, slowly, but surely, undermining pagan institutions, in all quarters of the globe. They have even unlocked Japan, traversed China, obtained a footing in Hindostan, and successfully introduced Christianity into Madagascar and South Africa. Many important islands, too, in the South Seas, have been reclaimed. And the work must proceed in an accelerating ratio as it gains ground.

"There are, however, many difficulties to overcome in the fields of labor, consequent upon the fearful degradation and superstitions of the heathen, the prevalence of caste in some nations,

and the natural depravity of the human heart which every-where prevails, and is every-where formidable in its resistance to holiness of life. But the chief hinderance is undoubtedly at home, in our scanty liberality, as compared with the work to be done. I do not believe the Church contributes a hundredth part of what it ought to, and could, contribute from the wealth of its members and congregations. And the plain reason is, that even Christians fail to recognize the fact that they are not proprietors, but only stewards; and, therefore, actually embezzle the Lord's money, under the mistaken notion that it is their own, and they may therefore give or withhold according to their convenience or inclination. And sometimes they take it very ill to be admonished otherwise, even in the kindest manner. Ministers, too, often confirm this state of things, by flattering rich men into contributing, and then praising their 'noble generosity,' when, in reality, they have failed to surrender a tithe of what they ought to appropriate to the object presented. I often fear there will be a terrible account rendered at last, by men now living at their ease, when the Lord returns and demands his own, which has been applied to selfish ends, instead of devoted to the interests of his kingdom."

The meeting at night was very largely attended, and was intensely interesting. The girls all came home glowing with missionary-zeal in behalf of the poor degraded women of heathen countries, much to the gratification of our father and Uncle Toby. They still retain their earnestness and active sympathy in the cause; and I sometimes fear that we shall lose Mattie by the demand for female teachers in the foreign mission work. The sacrifice, in such an event, would be more than I could well bear.

XV.

ON MARIOLATRY.

ONE Monday evening, in the month of May, my sisters, Lucy and Mattie, went to the Romish Church to witness the ceremonies in honor of the Virgin Mary, where they were very much bewildered by the display of gewgaws around the large image, the genuflections and burning of incense before it, and the hymns of praise sung to the Virgin, accompanied by the loud peals of the organ. And they were horrified, likewise, by the supplications offered directly to the Virgin, "O, Mary, bless us, and forgive our sins. O, Mary, endue us with heavenly virtue;" mingled with infrequent, casual, and faint ascriptions to her Divine Son as deriving honor from her, instead of from the Father. Next morning they were full of the theme, and Lucy said:

"It seemed awfully blasphemous to me. What do you think of such things, Uncle Toby?"

He replied, "You have the right feeling toward them, my dear. The worship of the Virgin is as sheer idolatry as the worship of the Grand Llama, with this difference in favor of the latter, that the very book by which the Romanists profess to be guided as a Church, even taking their own version, the Douay Bible, explicitly prohibits any such homage to the creature. And yet, besides the mother of Jesus, they worship an almost endless array of saints, good, bad, and doubtful."

This center shot overthrew our gravity.

He continued, "That very talented and pious man, Rev. Frederick W. Robertson, out of the excessive generosity of his noble heart, throws the mantle of charity over this practice, and partially excuses it on the ground that it comes from a felt want of the deification of feminine as well as masculine human nature. The appropriate remedy, he declared to be, therefore, to present Christ himself as meeting this want by uniting in a compound human nature all that is most manly in man with all that is most womanly in woman. Of course, his transcendent genius made the theory appear very plausible and captivating. He was himself led to adopt it, no doubt, by one of his erroneous axioms of thought; namely, That in all things evil, there is a soul of goodness. Now this, which he gravely lays

down as a fundamental principle, will not, in reality, bear the least examination. Let us test it for a moment, and see how baseless it is. Will any one undertake to say that Satan, the personification of evil, has a soul of goodness anywhere about him? And what says the apostle on this very point, 'What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?'

"Now, as to the want of which Mr. Robertson speaks, I am satisfied it was but a figment of his own very brilliant imagination. Of necessity, Christ is simply a representative of the race, without sexual distinction, as the apostle expressly declares. In our day, we have heard considerable nonsense concerning mental sexuality, which, I believe, does not exist. I would be gratified to see any one seriously try to prove that man has any mental qualities which woman has not; or woman any faculties of which man is destitute, although it may be safely granted there are intellectual *modifications*, just as there are modifications in the features of the face. And it is a notable fact that the Scriptures positively enjoin upon all men the possession of those very qualities which are usually designated as distinctively feminine, as love, meekness, gentleness, patience, but I suppose not with any design to

transform them into women. So then, there is no foundation whatever for the idea that Christ's nature is a compound of manly and womanly attributes. And we must look elsewhere for the origin of Mariolatry. Nor will we need to go far in order to find it.

"The heathens had their Juno, Diana, Venus, and countless other female deities, as well as Jupiter, Saturn, Apollo, Mercury, and, indeed, whole troops of gods. And that, evidently, not because they thought female nature ought to be deified, for it is notorious that they regarded women as inferior, but rather for the same reason that the human race is sexualized. Now we have only to remember that as the quondam statue of Jupiter in Rome at present stands as the statue of St. Peter, so, every distinctive ceremony practiced by the Romish Church can be clearly traced back to the pagan ritual, as its source. In truth, Romanism is simply paganism in a Christian garb, and admixed with Christian doctrines, in part. The worship of the Virgin Mary, therefore, is simply an adoption of what they found established in the pagan world.

"However, in our Christian paganism, we find this anomaly existing. While the heathens regarded their feminine gods as inferior to those of the other sex, Mary is exalted above Christ,

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"However, in our Christian paganism, we find this anomaly existing. While the heathens regarded their feminine gods as inferior to those of the other sex, Mary is exalted above Christ,

being not only styled the Queen of Heaven, and the Mother of God, but presented much more prominently in all the devotions and teachings of the Romish Church. I think the explanation of this is near at hand. Paganism and Romanism are both inventions of the same cunning adversary. To the former, the Scriptures refer in styling the city of Pergamos, 'Satan's seat,' and declaring that 'the things which the Gentiles (that is, the Pagans) sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God.' And the latter is likewise spoken of in direct connection with that Wicked being revealed, 'whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders.' And, also, St. Paul, in writing to Timothy, of two distinctive doctrines of the Romish Church, 'forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats,' characterizes them as a 'giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.' Now, Satan found a necessity existing, in his work of perverting Christianity to suit his purposes, which did not stand in the way of paganism; and, accordingly, being a cunning workman, he modified his plan.

"In paganism, it was only needful to obscure God in his *spirituality*, by means of creature intervention. But in Romanism, it was necessary to supersede God in his *incarnated personality*, which

was, in like manner, to be done by the interposition of a creature; namely, the Virgin, who was chosen, not because she was a woman, but because she was the mother of Jesus. So we see that, in both cases, the principle is the same, and the design to be accomplished the same, and there was a simple modification to suit the peculiarity of the case. Hence, by degrees, the Virgin was exalted above Christ, in the estimation of Romanists. And in pursuance of the same object, the Bible was to be extinguished or hidden. It was accordingly withdrawn from the membership of the Church, and the few persons authorized to read it are strictly forbidden to use the right of private judgment on its teachings. They must servilely read it in the light of the Church interpretation. And thus, as Mary is exalted above Christ, so the dogmas of the Church, the writings of the fathers, and uncertain tradition, are endued with a much higher authority than the Scriptures. Thus we see how ingeniously the whole system of delusive error is dovetailed together, and how the worship of the Virgin is made the key-stone of the arch. A terrible stronghold of the great enemy has it been for many ages.

"And yet it seems a strange inconsistency that, in spite of the Vigin's titles and position,

she has been compelled to wait until our day to have her freedom from original sin authoritatively declared; just as the infallibility of the Pope had yet to be decided by the present fugitive Vatican Council, although the dogma had been tacitly and practically recognized ever since the time of Gregory, falsely called the Great.

"That Mary is entitled to high esteem among Christians, that she is highly favored and blessed among women, is both reasonable and Scriptural. But sensible and pious as she was, and glorified as she now is, no one can be more disgusted with the mummery and idolatrous honors paid her by this apostate Church than she herself would be could she witness them, I have no doubt. And let us rejoice that sacred prophecy points to a period when creature worship shall utterly cease and glory and majesty be ascribed to God alone."

XVI.

ON LAUGHTER.

MY youngest sister, Molly, came home from Sunday-school, one afternoon, evidently making strong, but only partially successful, efforts to obtain control of her risibilities. It so happened, for some reason or other, that none of us, besides her, had attended the school that day, although we were usually on hand—Uncle Toby and all. So we were ignorant of Molly's cause of mirth; but observed her struggles with deep interest, and waited for a voluntary disclosure. At tea-time it came. She said, "Uncle Toby, my teacher says we must never laugh at Sunday-school or Church; for it is too serious a place for that. What do you think about it?"

"Why, my dear, we ought never to laugh out of season, or without due cause. But we should be natural every-where. And if any thing irresistibly ludicrous occurs at Church or Sunday-

school, I suppose it is quite natural, and therefore quite proper, to laugh at it. What occasion had the teacher to give you the caution?"

"Well," she replied, "in time of Sunday-school, the minister somehow upset a pitcher of water into Mr. Lang's hat; and then took the hat by the rim with both hands, and carried it that way to the open window, and poured the water out. It looked so funny. O dear"—and she went into a convulsion of laughter, in which we all joined heartily.

"I fear," said Uncle Toby, "I should have laughed, too, had I witnessed that kind of a Sunday-school performance. Indeed, a ludicrous thing in such a place is, from contrast, much more absurd and comical than anywhere else. And I see no sin, or irreverence, in laughing at it, as moderately as possible. I once attended a camp-meeting, when, on Sunday forenoon, an idiot came into the altar, at the beginning of the service, with his hat full of green apples, which he carefully deposited under the seat, at the end next the aisle, and sat down very quietly. During the sermon he gazed for some time in the direction of one corner of the preacher's stand, then rose at length, selected an apple from the hat, took deliberate aim, and sent it whirling into the face of a sleeping man, who was, by no

means, slow in taking the hint, but instantly sprang to his feet. There he stood glaring at the idiot, who sternly returned the stare from his position in the aisle, declaring that he would keep him awake, if it took all the apples in his hat. But the work was thoroughly done without any further expenditure of fruit. You can judge of the effect produced by the incident upon the seriousness of the large assemblage.

"A friend of mine, in the early days of his ministry, was in charge of a very extensive circuit, embracing some twenty appointments. At one country place, he preached in a school-house, standing with his face to the door. One member of the society there, was a faithful and punctual man, who always came to meeting with an ox-cart filled with his family and neighbors seated on chairs. On a certain Summer afternoon, this brother was late, from some cause; and the minister commenced preaching. But soon, hearing a noise, he cast a glance through the window, and saw brother A. coming, in the usual fashion, but evidently in trepidation at being behind time, hurrying up his oxen, and whirling around the corner of the house, to the door. Just as he stopped, by some means, he accidentally sprung the bolt which kept the cart-bed level, and up it tilted, turning out the pas-

sengers, chairs and all, into a heap, like a load of bricks. This was very hard on the minister, you may be sure. It would have been fatal to me, so far as that service was concerned.

"There is a class of persons, however, who have no perception of the ludicrous, as there are others who have no perception of colors. They are not to be condemned for this; but usually they are liable to just censure for another thing; namely, they are prone to judge those uncharitably who differ from them in this regard, and even go so far as to pronounce it sinful for a Christian to laugh, except merely for joy of heart. The argument they employ against it is, that, although Christ was, at different times, observed to weep, he was never known to laugh; and, in all things, he is to be our example. Now this logic is remarkable, not for its strength, but for its extreme looseness. That Christ never laughed can not be proved. We know it is quite common to write biographies of men in which there is not the least allusion to their ever having laughed; so that the silence of the Scriptures on this point is no valid evidence. It can not even be claimed that we have a full narrative of the important events of the Redeemer's life. St. John says expressly in the close of his Gospel, that his account is far from

complete. And we have a remarkable, and very important saying of Jesus, incidentally preserved in the Acts, of which not one of the evangelists makes any mention; namely, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

"And as to the presumption in the present case, it is all the other way. In the first place, because Christ was a perfect man, and, therefore, must have possessed a sense of the ludicrous, the proper and natural expression of which is laughter. Man is the only earthly creature who can laugh; and the faculty of perceiving the ludicrous is as fully a peculiarity in his nature as is the perception of cause and effect. And why was this peculiar faculty bestowed, if it is not to be used? We know also that Christ employed sarcasm, which is inseparably allied to the faculty in question. For example, in speaking to the Pharisees, in regard to the traditions of the elders, he said, '*Full well ye reject the commandment of God*, that ye may keep your own tradition.' And in one of his scathing rebukes, he said, 'Wherefore, ye be witnesses unto yourselves that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. *Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.*'

"And as to the other branch of the argument I am speaking of, we may say that Christ

is indeed our Great Exemplar as regards all specific moral virtues and devotional feelings which are universally applicable. But he never married, nor can we conceive that he could consistently have entered into the marriage relation. Are we therefore never to marry? And other particulars of the kind might be urged.

"Furthermore, even these objectors allow a laugh of joy; but can they show that Christ ever uttered one? So we find their objection to be without value.

"No other man ever occupied the same position that Jesus did. And so, many things which would have been inconsistent with his mission may, nevertheless, be strictly appropriate to us.

"There is likewise an opposite class of persons who find something to laugh at, long and loudly, in the most commonplace matters, where, ordinarily, men can perceive nothing ludicrous. This is very disgusting, and is perhaps to be regarded as a kind of disease, or partial insanity of the ludicrous faculty, which then acts similarly to an abnormal condition of the optic nerve imposing upon the vision any number of phantasies.

"Laughter ought not to be excessive. In all things, we are to exercise self-control, and in all enjoyments preserve moderation. It should also

be spontaneous, and never forced; it should be chaste, and never excited by impure anecdotes. It should not be employed on the unavoidable defects or infirmities of others. It should never be malicious, or tend in any manner to give offense, or wound feelings. But laughter may be cheerful and innocent; and it is then neither unnatural nor unchristian. And, moreover, physicians tell us that it often has an important influence in promoting health. It is certain that a happy temper is usually connected with a mirthful disposition; and is also healthful, and that a sour, cynical, morose turn of mind is as destructive of good health as it is of mirth."

Molly was quite elated with Uncle Toby's indorsement of her response to the hat demonstration at the Sunday-school; and we all felt satisfied with his treatment of the subject of laughter, and accordingly propose to go on practicing, as proper opportunities occur.

XVII.

ON AGRICULTURAL FAIRS.

ALL Bingtown was in commotion one day during our county fair; for, in the afternoon, the indispensable adjunct of such occasions nowadays was to be displayed; namely, a general horse-race. I very well understood Uncle Toby's sentiments concerning such matters, but desiring to draw him into their expression, I asked him, at dinner.

"Are you not going out to the fair grounds? As people esteem it, the most interesting event of the whole time takes place there to-day?"

He replied, "Not the *most* interesting, but the *only* interesting event of the concern, judging from the published premium-list, which shows that the whole arrangement has reference to it, as a common focus or center. The inducements held out to the improvement of stock and farm products, the advancement of mechanic arts, fancy work, horticulture, and the like, are plainly

a minor and secondary consideration altogether to that of one horse excelling another in speed. To the former are awarded a few paltry diplomas, a few agricultural newspapers, and an occasional dollar or two; while to the latter are appropriated large purses of money, as if it were far more vital to the substantial interests of the country to foster racing than farming or mechanics, It does really seem that nothing can be devised, however beneficial in itself, which will not be usurped by unprincipled men, and selfishly ruined or fatally perverted. Agricultural fairs, if honestly held to their original design of cherishing and promoting industrial progress by a healthful, friendly cómpetition, must, necessarily, be of much advantage; but behold, we find them transformed into a contemptible horse-racing farce. This ought to be severely frowned upon, and effectually denounced by the the entire moral sentiment of the community. Let the intelligent farmers and mechanics no longer submit to be enslaved by a reckless gang of irresponsible sporting men, but keep their products at home as too precious to serve as mere adornments of a flight of horses entertaining a curious gaping crowd. Especially should Christian men and women positively refuse to contribute any thing to a scene which tends only

to demoralize the people worse, even, than the heathen games of ancient Greece and Rome in honor of the false gods, and that, too, under the specious guise of advancing the interests of agriculture and the arts.

"The whole thing is inappropriate to the design of county fairs, even if there were no other objection. But besides this, it is downright gambling. We know that large and general betting is as inseparable from horse-racing as from the card-table. And were this effectually prohibited, I have no doubt the absorbing interest manifested on such occasions would be materially abated, if not wholly destroyed. Mere curiosity would hardly suffice to keep it up to its present pitch.

"I would, of course, hold out encouragment to the improvement and training of horses, as well as to the improvement of other animals. But let the inducements relate merely to utility, in regard to those qualities which render the horse so valuable in farm uses, or to a family. Nothing can be plainer, I think, than that speed in a horse is in general of little practical utility. If we send our families abroad in a carriage, we do not desire them to go dashing along at a John Gilpin rate of speed. And, likewise, it is certain that when we attach horses to a plow, we have no

desire that they shall go across the field in a sweeping trot. The qualities we seek in a horse relate to what we want him to do; a draught horse we wish thus, and a carriage horse thus. So that, at fairs, horses, as other animals, should be assorted, and classified in regard to these every-day qualities. But in no case is a high rate of speed connected with general utility. A moderately brisk and lively motion, docility, obedience, and a patient steadiness, are the traits in common demand. Now let the premiums be awarded on these and similar grounds, excluding mere speed from consideration altogether. This, I think, is the only remedy for the horse-racing mania, which has taken possession of our fairs.

"I know it is said that if this were done, fairs could not be made to pay expenses. Very well; if there is not a legitimate demand for them, and if their interest must be kept up by artificial stimulants, then let them go at once. But for the most part, I am satisfied the assertion is not true. There is an intrinsic attraction in pure expositions. Take, for example, the late Cincinnati Industrial Exposition, where there was no racing or morbid excitement resorted to. It paid well, being sometimes attended by thirty thousand persons in a single day, and continuing a month

with unabated interest. And, undoubtedly, the same, in a minor degree, might be expected in all county fairs where there is creditable management. But if the moral feelings of Christians are to be continually trampled upon by means of these wretched horse-racing contrivances, the sooner the thing passes into merited oblivion the better for community. At least, so I think."

None of us went to the fair-grounds that afternoon, you may be sure.

XVIII.

ON EDITORS.

I OBSERVED, one morning, that Uncle Toby appeared somewhat clouded and displeased, which, as I supposed, was caused by something in the Bingtown *Sentinel* he held in his hand. But it turned out, on the contrary, to be something which was not in the paper. Some days previously, he had published an article concerning a general topic, which called forth a vigorous criticism from another contributor, based in reality upon a partial misunderstanding. He then sent in a brief, respectful, well written, explanatory reply, which, for some reason, the editor had arbitrarily excluded.

"That is certainly treating a man well," indignantly said Uncle Toby, "to let the dogs loose on him, and refuse him all opportunity of defending himself, or even explaining when he is misunderstood. But editors are petty despots, and

like other despots, love sometimes to show their authority merely because they can."

I could not help laughing at the old gentleman's vigorous sally, which laughter seemed a little infectious, since he immediately put on, in unison, a kind of broad smile, indicative of returning good humor.

"But then, Uncle Toby," said I, "you must consider the responsibility of editors, also. They may be despotic toward contributors, on the principle that a slave makes the hardest master. But to their readers they hold a different relalation, and serve under a very imperious taskmaster; to wit, the public. And as to contributors, it is only charitable to suppose that the apparent peccadilloes of editors are only the result of a mistaken judgment; or, perhaps, of a justly irritated temper. It seems to me if I were an editor, I would live in such a state of chronic exasperation, in consequence of the miserable doggerel and senseless prose with which a sanctum is apt to be deluged continually, that, in my bewilderment, I should be extremely liable, at times, maliciously to thrust the wrong piece into the waste basket."

This brought the old gentleman into a decidedly happy mood, which was signaled by a merry peal of laughter.

"Well, my boy," he said "you are a valorous defender, and doubtless there is much reason and justice in what you say. And yet, I suppose, it would be useless to deny that most editors have the common infirmity of worshiping position, instead of estimating merit. Some time since, a prominent contributor of the *Atlantic Monthly* tried an experiment, which very clearly illustrates this point. He sent in an article for the magazine under a fictitious signature, which, without hesitation, was rejected. A few days afterward he called at the office, and contrived to lead the editor to speak of the article, who sneered at it very contemptuously, until, at length, the writer very cautiously revealed himself as the author of the rejected piece, much to the chagrin of the editor, who, if I recollect rightly, servilely fished up and published it. And I fear most of them thus go by name, instead of merit—that is, by favoritism, instead of impartial judgment. And book publishers do the same thing; whereby it has come to pass that some of our very best authors were, for years, unable to get before the public, and compelled to go begging and pleading around the whole circle before they could secure a hearing at all. Many instances of this kind might be cited. Publishers require one first to *make* a

name; and yet, at the same time, sternly withhold all the facilities for making a name, until genius at last becomes able to break the barrier, which some, by reason of hopeless poverty, never are able to do. Then, when an author, unaided, at length succeeds by some fortunate conjuncture of circumstances, or the pitying favor of some casual friend, in creating a market for his intellectual products, under every disadvantage, publishers are ready to step in kindly and secure the profits for themselves. Now, I hold that editors and publishers always have it in their power to excite a demand for any thing really meritorious and adapted to the mental and moral necessities of the reading public. All they have to do is simply to enforce the work on the public attention. And if they would only set themselves to bring out merit, it would be vastly better for the world.

"But instead of this, we find them, in general, pandering to a perverse and vitiated taste, like the venders of spirituous liquors, and thus still more and more corrupting the public morals by empty and vicious sensationalisms. Very prominent among publications of this kind stands the New York *Ledger*, in which nearly all the stories burdening its columns are utterly without meaning or instruction, having no effect,

except the injurious one of inflaming morbid imaginations. To be sure, this is offset by a page of moral reading in each number, as a kind of sugar-coating for the poison regularly distilled through the sheet. The only result of Mr. Beecher's stated half column is to make him a party to the corrupting influence of the paper. The page does not serve at all as an antidote to the soporific power of the *Ledger* in lulling to sleep the intellects and consciences of habitual readers, who will very seldom be found to have any taste for solid information; just as one whose taste is spoiled by an excessive use of condiments will lose the natural relish for healthful food. At the very best, this is the legitimate result of an immoderate reading of fiction, which ought always to be used sparingly, as we use pepper at our meals. But, when we also take into the account the inherent character of *Ledger* literature, we can not but perceive the incalculable harm which that paper, and others like it, are doing in our country.

"Fiction should only be a medium of imparting correct views of life and its manifold duties, and tend continually to make its readers stronger to do and dare in the great conflict in which we are all engaged. Whatever fails of this, comes of evil.

"It is a source of much comfort that religious and scientific periodicals, and philosophical magazines, are becoming a power in the land. Also the daily and weekly political papers, with some very grave faults, and a great deal of lamentable recklessness, nevertheless teem with vast stores of general information, from which may be expected very beneficial results in the promotion of mental culture and intelligence among the people—and especially as religion itself has a considerable share of attention. The state of our current literature might be much better than it is; but, on the other hand, it might be much worse. And I feel very hopeful as to the ultimate result."

By this time, Uncle Toby had entirely forgotten his personal grievance; and the accustomed look of serene happiness resumed its place in his beaming countenance. He never referred to the event afterward which gave rise to the remarks quoted above.

XIX.

ON PROFESSOR TYNDALL'S PROPOSITION.

"HOW did you like the sermon last night?" I inquired of Uncle Toby, on a certain Monday morning, at the breakfast-table. Mr. Sequence had preached, the evening before, in opposition to what is known as the Tyndall Hospital Test of Prayer.

"I confess," replied he, "that it disappointed me; because, as I think, while it was a fine piece of rhetoric, it entirely missed the subject in hand. In the first place, the minister confounded the logical distinctions, which in such a discussion ought to be kept sharply defined, by insisting that every thing prays,—beasts, birds, plants, and even bad men, as well as the righteous. Now, I could not discover the bearing of this rhetorical figure upon the topic of discourse. Then, again, he impeached Tyndall's motives, without due warrant, so far as I could see. It

would, indeed, require us to regard the professor as a monster of cruelty, in order to acknowledge that he could throw out a proposal of this sort, without any conviction of the efficacy of prayer at all; for, then, it would amount to this, that he advocates withdrawing from a hospital, or certain wards therein, all remedies possessing healing power, and thus abandoning the patients, for years, to a treatment which can, by no possibility, avail any thing. I can not, at present, consent to brand him as thus wholly destitute of humanity. But, as I understand his position, it is this: 'Medicines are efficacious; prayer is efficacious,—I propose to try the comparative merits of the two, regarded as acting in accordance with natural laws.' I can not acknowledge that he should willfully advise that patients be left to perish by neglect.

"But, furthermore, the minister devoted the body of his sermon to the proof of what in this matter is logically out of the question, being undisputed by the proposition he was combating; namely, that God answers prayer. This point is necessarily assumed in the proposal,—so that all proof cast upon that doctrine is labor thrown away, in the present instance. The real question was left wholly untouched; namely, 'Is it expedient to subject the efficacy of prayer to

such a test?' or, 'Have we any authority to believe that God will respond to an experiment of the kind?'

"Now, on these points, I have noticed very few objections which would not bear as forcibly against the test between Elijah and the prophets of Baal; which, we know, was honored by the Lord. Such witticisms as that of Mr. Tilton, concerning the business of 'praying at a mark,' possess no merit except mere facetiousness, which can be as readily applied to sacred things as to any other. Did not Elijah, in that sense, pray at a mark, and successfully? We must examine the matter more closely than to stop at these flimsy sneers.

"Even at the present day, we see explicit tests established,—such, for example, as Mr. Müller's orphan asylum, wherein he refuses to employ any of the ordinary means of supplying the wants of an institution, but relies exclusively upon prayer. And he firmly believes himself thus appointed to illustrate a special divine providence in the affairs of the world. And, a few days since, I met this paragraph, which I transferred to my memorandum from the daily paper containing it:

"'Pastor Christoph Blumhardt, formerly of Möttlingen, in Würtemberg, Germany, and now located in the

Castle of Bael, in the above kingdom, has been, and is, healing bodily diseases by nothing else than prayer. The castle was presented to him, by the father of the present King of Würtemberg, for hospital purposes; and thousands of natives and foreigners resort thither for the cure of their bodily ailments, and find it too. This fact I have from the mouth of my friend, the Rev. Dr. John Lichtenstein, of the First German Presbyterian Church, in this city [Cincinnati], who has known Pastor Blumhardt, as a friend, since 1840. Dr. Lichtenstein describes Pastor Blumhardt as a very sober and philosophic man, far from any taint of enthusiasm. Dr. Lichtenstein's name is here given to the public, as a guaranty of truthfulness. Any further information will be gladly given by him.'

"And, in this connection, it may be worthy of remark that St. James seems to recognize prayer and anointing as an ordinary remedy for disease: 'Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick; and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.'

"Against the proposed test, however, there are two very forcible arguments. The first is, that Christ, while on earth, always refused to work miracles, or give signs, at the request of unbelievers. The other is, the reply to Dives: 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. . . . And he said unto him, If

they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.' And yet, in the facts I have above cited, it is plain that more than the Scriptures is actually given,—so that, after all, the adoption of the test seems to be remanded back to a question of expedience—or rather, perhaps, of providential indication; for I do not believe we can, at pleasure, put the divine power under requisition for an arbitrary proof.

"Meanwhile, certain counter-tests have been proposed, in response to Professor Tyndall, which, in any event, it can do no harm to put into active operation. That by the Fulton-street prayer-meeting, of New York City, is, to unite in prayer for the sound conversion of Professor Tyndall himself, who is now in this country. That by the *Zion's Herald* is, to propose certain famous sinners for the prayers of God's people. But attached to this is a provision which, I think, can not be too strongly condemned; namely, that the previous history of these sinners be published in advance. Both these tests, however, are limited by the moral agency of the specified subjects of prayer, and, besides, do not bear directly upon the doctrine of a special providence in the practical affairs of life.

"I do not believe that Professor Tyndall's

proposal ought to be accepted, without a plain providential indication, like the call of Müller to the care of his orphans, manifested in some form to be interpreted when it comes. At present, it does not seem to me that there exists any such unmistakable indication; and mere experimenting, without light or direction, is, I think, extremely hazardous."

Uncle Toby's views concerning the motives of Professor Tyndall were amply confirmed afterward by an explanation from the professor himself, which appeared in the *Contemporary Review*.

XX.

ON THE SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.

THE proceedings of Mr. Bergh, President of the Humane Society in New York, were severely criticised, one morning, in the Bingtown *Sentinel*, as an unwarrantable interference, by a visionary fanatic, with vested rights of property; upon the ground that every man in society has a personal right to do as he pleases with his own property, so long as he does not injure his neighbors' rights of person or property. Said the editor: "It is a great error for a man to abuse his horse; but it is his own concern, if he chooses to do so. No individual or society has any just power to interfere."

"It is a great pity," commented Uncle Toby, "that we have among us a race of conceited scribblers, who are forever jabbering away at every thing that comes along, but, as St. Paul

said of similar characters in his day, 'understanding neither what they say nor whereof they affirm.' What are the rights of person? Are they those relating to the comfort of the body merely, excluding the mind and heart? Is not the pursuit of happiness a personal right, specified as such even in our national Declaration of Independence Does not a man invade our personal rights, then, when he lacerates our feelings by a display of brutality? Do not the exhibitions of cruelty in our streets tend as fully to debauch the morals of our children as does the view of obscene pictures in our shop-windows, against which we find it needful to provide by law? Would this sapient writer advocate the right of any one to establish bull or bear fights among us, at his pleasure? Are not the public morals a legitimate and highly necessary subject of legal protection?

"Mr. Bergh and his coadjutors are doing a noble work, and richly deserve the approval of every humane citizen, instead of being stigmatized as fanatics or disturbers of the peace. The Scriptures emphatically declare, 'A merciful man regardeth the life of his beast.' And the poet Cowper uttered a noble sentiment when he said:

'I would not enter on my list of friends,
Though graced with polished manners and fine sense

(Yet wanting sensibility), the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.
An inadvertent step may crush the snail
Which crawls at evening in the public path;
But he who hath humanity, forewarned,
Will turn aside, and let the reptile live.'

And no man with such a feeling as this could, by any possibility, have written the editorial in this morning's *Sentinel.*

"It is lamentable that so great necessity exists for the organization of such societies as that of Mr. Bergh. All through the land, and especially in cities, even that noble animal, the horse, is most shamefully treated, by overloading, beating, stinted feeding, and other modes of cruelty. Most dray-horses have to draw twice as much as they ought, and are tightly reined up at that, instead of being allowed the free use of their heads and necks, so indispensable to a horse required to lay out his whole strength; and the inhuman drivers help them along, besides, by constant whipping when thus overburdened. Likewise, on our street railroads, the straining of horses is frightful. It is said that, in Paris, no more passengers are allowed on street-cars than can be accommodated with seats, which rule ought to be rigidly enforced everywhere. Butchers, too, need constant restraint, as they are often extremely heartless.

"Every Summer we have a raid on dogs—which, I grant, are usually too numerous. This is done on the plea of danger from hydrophobia, although it is asserted by apparently good authority that dogs are no more liable to this disease in hot weather than in cold. Last Summer, in a certain large city, a decree went forth against the dogs, and boys were even tempted by rewards to steal and bring them into a place provided as a pound. At one time, there were three hundred imprisoned together, in a close cellar-room, and kept for three days in a kind of Black Hole of Calcutta, without food or drink, while the thermometer ranged at about one hundred degrees. Then two slayers were sent in among them, with sledges, who made wretched work of the matter.

"Now, man rules the inferior creatures by appointment, and is accordingly required to conform his government to the principles of the divine government. Hence, the rights of animals are as legitimate a subject of legislation as the rights of man; although, of course, they do not stand in the same degree. But, alas! it seems natural to man to abuse any authority which may be intrusted to him, and so his tyrannical disposition constantly requires an effectual check upon it. Animals can not speak for themselves; and there are too few of man-

kind who care to take the trouble to vindicate their claims.

"I think, however, that the good work now begun in this direction will go far toward the needed reform. And, probably, the time will come when it will be thought cruel to keep birds, as we do, in close imprisonment all their lives—just as it would be regarded to keep a child so. I know this is not done with a cruel design, but the very contrary. Still, to deprive them of their natural liberty seems quite an anomalous method of manifesting our affection for them."

Molly did not exactly relish the termination of the foregoing remarks, having two pet canaries and a mocking-bird in cages, and being very much attached to them; and, as to the other girls, I fear no converts were made among them on the bird question. However, what Uncle Toby said looks very reasonable to me; and I trust no one will ever love me so well as to shut me up in prison, gilded though it be.

XXI.

ON EXPENSIVE FUNERALS.

AT the funeral of a prominent citizen of Bingtown I observed a number of empty carriages in the long and imposing procession. That evening, I took occasion to ask Uncle Toby for an explanation of it.

He replied, "I would not undertake to explain it in this case, my boy. But sometimes such expedients are resorted to in order to enhance the display."

"Display at a funeral!" exclaimed Lucy.

"Yes, my dear. It seems shocking, indeed, to speak of such a thing, or even to think that there could be a pompous pageant connected with an exhibition of the humilation of our race, or an ostentatious vanity over the work of death. But so it is. And only a few years ago, the rage for costly funerals became a mania, infecting all classes in our great cities. And it was not left optional,

but was exacted of all who desired to be thought respectable, so that poor persons were often much embarrassed, and well-nigh ruined, in this manner. And I regret to say the senseless practice is not yet abandoned, by any means.

"It is very difficult to account for the phenomenon. At first view, one might feel inclined to attribute its origin to the masses for the dead in the Romish Church, concerning which the notion is that the more money thus expended the more secure would be the condition of the departed souls in the other world. But then we know that the incongruity existed among the ancients, long before the rise of the Catholic Church. And it is said now to be found even among some tribes of our Indians. Last Spring, when I was in Nebraska, I was there told that the Otoes held it a high point of honor to make the most extravagant outlays on the burial of their friends. Instances have been known where the survivors parted with all their ponies, and reduced themselves thus, without regret, to abject destitution, in order to hire numerous mourners, and otherwise show respect, according to their notions, to the deceased.

"Now, even over a Christian victor, pomp is wholly out of place. A solemn simplicity is alone appropriate on such an occasion. And I believe

the time will come when all processions will be dispensed with.

"A similar absurdity, closely connected with this one, is witnessed in costly mourning dresses made up with a close regard to all the behests of reigning fashion, which, as I think, is a mere mockery of grief.

"No doubt, an effectual check will yet be put to the nonsense, by means of the dying requests of distinguished personages for a plain and simple burial. But it is sad that they are compelled to make such requests, which, however, are becoming quite customary. There is a due medium to be observed, whereby meanness can be avoided on the one hand, and, on the other, a chaste respect be expressed in language more clear and forcible than words."

XXII.

ON CONVENTIONAL MANNERS.

ONE fine evening, our lively friend, Jennie Bryan, came flashing in, as was her wont, having a copy of Chesterfield's Letters in her hand, which, after the usual greeting, she reached toward Uncle Toby, with the inquiry,

"What think you of my present course of study?"

He took the book, and glancing at the title, replied:

"Well, my dear, I can not approve it without some qualifications or cautions. This book, I think, ought to be read and studied by all young people, but with a needful discrimination. The author's maxims and directions concerning ease, grace of manner, and self-possession, are exceedingly valuable. His Letters, too, have the merit of recognizing the true object of polite demeanor, which many who claim to be polite altogether

misunderstand. Chesterfield teaches that the purpose is to please others with whom we associate, while these suppose the object is to be admired themselves. And in striving to secure this end, they miss politeness, and their ultimate aim at once. They dazzle and confound those around them, while true politeness consists in putting every one completely at his ease.

"But, in these Letters, there is much to be avoided, as well as much to be studied. Some of the recommendations therein are of a decidedly immoral tendency, and even involve falsehood. And this necessarily results from constructing a mere external code of manners with which a man is to envelop himself, instead of implanting the principle of sincerity within from which naturally flows a wish to please, and to which may appropriately be conjoined a knowledge of forms whereby it can best be manifested. A hollow system of glittering, polished ceremonies may easily become a system of base hypocrisy and deception; and, in the intercourse of so-called polite society, it often does become so, of necessity. The whole 'not at home' policy has its origin and practice in positive falsehood. And thus the system of conventionalities has crystallized a large number of falsehoods into unmeaning compliments, apologies, and invitations. So closely

is worldly polish allied to deception, that Chesterfield himself was obliged to warn his son against such as were

> 'With smooth dissimulation skilled to grace
> A devil's purpose with an angel's face.

"Now, what is lacking in the system of Chesterfield is supplied by the Gospel. St. Paul laid down the principle of Christian politeness almost in the words of Chesterfield, but with an infinitely higher meaning, 'Let every man please his neighbor for his good to edification.' And to this St. Peter responds, 'Be pitiful, be courteous.' So we see a Christian has no right to be rough, blunt, boorish, awkward, or uncouth, either from choice or neglect of culture. In other words, every Christian man should be a gentleman, continually aiming to please, avoiding every thing offensive in his manner, and tender of the feelings of all persons, in whatever condition of life. And the essence of Christian politeness is, that it comes from the heart, in which is constantly to dwell a spirit of meekness, gentleness, and love. The natural result of such a spirit is a desire to please others, not for any selfish advantage, but merely to impart happiness and adorn the Gospel by a godly life.

"Having thus the root of the matter within us, a little close observation and study will put

us in possession of appropriate forms of civilty to correspond with the disposition of heart. There are some prescribed conventionalities to which, indeed, a Christian will always refuse conformity, that is, those by which the truth is marred or violated. But in all minor things, he should be careful to avoid singularity. And herein is the maxim strictly correct, 'When in Rome, do as they do in Rome.' If, for example, it is considered rude to use a knife instead of a fork in eating, there is no reason why Christians should defiantly employ a knife in the prohibited manner. If the usual cut of garments be American, we have no right to attract notice by the singularity of wearing the ancient Jewish dress, on the plea that the Savior did so.

"But if we study rules of politeness, we should be very careful to avoid retaining, or, at least, exhibiting, a consciousness of acting by rule. Otherwise, we shall fall into a stiff and offensive affectation. I have sometimes been placed, as it were, on nettles, in company with certain persons, whose every gesture and tone not only was studied, but evidently appeared to be studied. It is said that the perfection of art consists in obliterating all traces of art. The rules of behavior should fit into our bearing as the rules of grammar are to fit into our language, not to be

quoted, or borne in mind at every expression; but observed easily, naturally, unconsciously. It is better to trust merely to the impulses of a loving heart untrammeled by any forms, than so to study books on manners as to make it always apparent that we are working in harness. An easy, unaffected simplicity is the genuine character of courtesy, and is always pleasing and admirable. So far as rules help us to its attainment, they are useful, otherwise injurious. And in any treatise on politeness, we shall find some arbitrary rules laid down which are more honored in the breach than in the observance. I would, therefore, advise you, my dears, to study the bent of your own minds, and adopt only such rules as shall assist you to get rid of defects which hinder you, and to cultivate your own peculiarities into a pleasing development."

We unanimously voted this the best discourse on manners we had ever heard or read. Probably, we were helped to this conclusion by our settled conviction that Uncle Toby possesses the happy art of hitting the center of every thing he aims at—a delusion it may be, but harmless and excusable in us.

XXIII.

ON FASHION IN DRESS.

ONE evening, at tea-time, Uncle Toby appeared, bearing under his arm a large roll, which, when opened, was found to contain materials for a dress for each of the girls—a present which he had purchased on his way home. The goods were very beautiful, those for Mattie and Lucy being off the same piece, as they were much alike in complexion and features. Of course they were much delighted, as young ladies always are on such occasions; and little Molly fairly capered with glee. As might be expected, the donor received an extra supply of kisses from all the recipients. Presents from him are, by no means, unusual, but they are always received in much the same animated manner; for, at any rate, the old gentleman is almost idolized among us.

During supper the girls were busily engaged, partly in admiring the beauty of the fabrics, and

partly in discussing how they should be made up; when, finally, Mattie responded to a suggestion of Lucy, "O, that would n't be fashionable at all." Uncle Toby was observed to smile, and Lucy remarked, "Uncle Toby is amused at our anxiety about the fashions;" to which Mattie made answer by asking his opinion directly on following the fashions in dress.

"Well, my dear," he replied, "as to the fluctuations of fashion, I am not very accurately informed with respect to their origin. Some, I believe, are attributed to that center of frivolity, Paris, and some to a much more dubious source. But, in general terms, I would say we ought to pay due regard to the customs of dress prevailing in the country where we live, as we conform to manners, and with similar qualifications."

"O, do n't you think," interrupted our frisky little Molly, "that Mrs. Pure says it is wicked to follow the fashions; and we ought to wear a sunbonnet and old-fashioned dresses, like she does, if we mean to be Christians?"

"Mrs. Pure is a very devoted and admirable Christian," said Uncle Toby, "whose example, as to vital piety, may well be imitated by all of us. And, while it must be acknowledged that she has some very impracticable notions on the subject of dress, yet, even in this respect, we

should take care to give her no needless offense. She is far from being cynical or sour. Many good people, I think, have set themselves in opposition to particular forms and articles of apparel from a mistaken view of a passage in one of St. Peter's epistles: 'Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price.' Now, if, as some insist, this passage entirely prohibits the wearing of gold, it likewise forbids plaiting or dressing the hair, and putting on apparel. But the meaning evidently is: Do not let outward adorning be your absorbing concern; but rather seek the decoration of spiritual virtues. I can not think St. Peter designed to condemn all bodily adornment, any more than the Savior intended to forbid earning money, or acquiring property, when he said, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures on the earth.'

"There are some Christians, I regret to say, who become exceedingly censorious and bitter hereupon, and certainly sin against God by becoming accusers of their brethren. I believe I have never told you of an encounter I once had

with a minister of this class. In his youth, he had been a vain man, but a promising lawyer. When converted, he went into the opposite extreme, in exact accordance with the old quaint maxim, 'The human mind is like a pendulum: it vibrates from one extreme to the other.' On the occasion I refer to, he preached the closing sermon at a camp-meeting which I attended. He was dressed in his usual suit of cotton-tweed, and had a large grease-spot on the back of the shoulder. His audience almost exclusively consisted of farmers and farmers' wives, all attired in the plainest manner. Nevertheless, in the course of his sermon, he struck the topic of dress, and roundly affirmed that the whole Church—bishops, presiding elders, elders, deacons, local-preachers, stewards, class-leaders, and membership, thus specifying them in detail, had all 'drifted out of the way of humility.' Yes, even the bishops, he said, would come to preside in the conferences with satin vests and broadcloth coats, thus setting a mischievous example for the ministry to follow. Not having an opportunity afterward to speak to him on the camp-ground concerning the matter, I wrote him a letter, which was, in substance, about as follows:

"'DEAR BROTHER,—Your closing sermon at the camp-meeting just held at ——, I confess impressed me

unfavorably, as it appeared very uncharitable, to say the least, for you to arraign the whole Church—specifying the various classes in it—on a charge of "drifting out of the way of humility." You enforced a recommendation for every Christian to wear cotton-tweed, on the ground that our duty is to seek the cheapest goods available. But on this principle, what will become of your religious reverence for Mr. Wesley, who was a very pattern of neatness and elegance, and never wore a large grease-spot on his shoulder by way of a Methodistic epaulette? And what can you think of Mr. Fletcher, who once received, as a present, a very fine piece of broadcloth; and not only returned thanks to the donor, but in beautiful language spiritualized the matter, expressing his intention to have the cloth manufactured into a garment which should always remind him when he would look upon it of the fine linen with which the saints are to be clothed? And what of Mr. Bramwell who, indeed, would only have a single suit of clothes at a time; but when these began to have a worn appearance, would give it to the poor, and purchase another for himself.

"'Furthermore, on your principle, what will become of yourself? While you were preaching, I observed you had buttons on your coat behind. Now, if you will read John Hersey's "Importance of Small Things," you will find that he prohibits this indulgence, in forcible language. If you give him a fair opportunity, he will cut off these superfluous buttons for you in a hurry. And besides, my dear brother, why do you wear a coat at all? A cotton-tweed roundabout would have been as comfortable on the day you preached, and is certainly cheaper; nay, you could have gone in your shirt sleeves; and this would have been cheaper still. Indeed, the cheapest dress I know of is an Indian blanket and moccasins; so that your principle of selection must, of necessity, land you in barbarism, as to apparel.

"'In fact, my brother, neither you nor any one else can

set up an infallible standard of dress. The only practical test within my knowledge is that contained in the answer of a celebrated English clergyman to his daughter who had asked him how she ought to dress: "My daughter," said he, "always dress so that no one will be likely to notice what you have on, either because of its meanness, or its display." And so the matter must be left to the judgment and conscience of every individual Christian to decide for himself or herself. No one has the right to dictate, or to lord it over another, in this regard.'"

The curtness of this letter greatly interested and amused us: and, at times, excited our mirth.

Mattie asked, "How did he take it?"

"He sent me a feeble reply, being evidently staggered. And the last time I saw him, he was very neatly and tastefully dressed; and I spent an exceedingly pleasant hour with him. I took to myself the credit of the reform; although I can not say certainly whether I was entitled to it or not.

"I knew an instance, almost immediately under my own observation, of a prominent advocate of Christian holiness in our Church positively refusing to speak a word on the subject to a sincere inquirer who sought an interview, because she had a modest artificial flower in her bonnet! It would seem we must all speak the same arbitrary and dictatorial shibboleth with certain teachers, or be refused their consent to enter the promised land!

"But do not misunderstand me. I do not advocate extravagance in dress. A profusion of ornaments, and overdressing, disfigure and deform, instead of adorn, the person. Good taste is the proper regulator, and should be cultivated to this end. A graceful simplicity, both in dress and manners, is the true standard of perfection. We should aid and develop, not obstruct nature.

"Sometimes, too, we may be called, by want of means, or by the demands of providence upon us, to restrict ourselves quite rigidly. And, in all cases, whatever tends to foster vanity ought to be strenuously avoided. If we find ourselves admiring our dress, or absorbed by it, or seeking to attract the admiration of others to it, we are in danger, and must beware.

"While I do not join in any tirade against fashions, yet I think we have a right to protest most vigorously against some of them, which are suicidal in their tendency. For example, tight lacing, which is sometimes in vogue, is highly criminal. Suicide by means of a corset is no less culpable than that by means of a knife or poison. We have a right to object, also, to high-heeled shoes, which not only injure the feet, but the spine likewise. Thin shoes, and clothes of fragile texture, we may properly oppose, because they bring on consumption. I was pleased with

the rebuke of a Quaker to a fashionable lady, who was shivering with a lace shawl and gauze-like clothing, adorned with a profusion of jewelry, as she was traveling in a public conveyance. 'O dear,' said she, 'what shall I do to get warm?' 'Indeed,' kindly replied the old man, 'I do not know, unless thee would put on another breast-pin!'

"With these hints and cautions, I say to you, my dears, by all means have a constant regard to whatever in the fashions is modest, tasteful, and appropriate. But I would not be a mere copyist, or servilely follow the fashions. Every one should adopt only such features of the prevailing styles as may best comport with the complexion, form, and surroundings. Unity in diversity is a law in every department of nature; and I should be sorry to see a rigid uniformity in ladies' or gentlemen's clothing, whether of the Puritan or any other pattern. Let there be preserved a sufficient regard for the fashion to avoid singularity, and modifications enough to secure propriety and variety. Outlandish fashions, however, involving a necessary disregard of good taste, should never be countenanced in the least.

"These are my views on this important matter. I would regret exceedingly to believe that I could ever become a snarling critic on modes of dress. And I have observed that, in general,

those who betake themselves to the task of putting the Church into a Christian uniform to be prescribed by themselves, become soured and cynical at their want of success. I knew a minister of this class who even would reprove Christians for cultivating flowers—it being, as he declared, a sinful waste of time which could be profitably employed, notwithstanding God thought it worth while to create them, and strew them thickly over the face of the earth. But as, on the one hand, we must not join them in their peculiar censorship, so, on the other, we must not judge them uncharitably, but, when with them, accommodate ourselves to their prejudices so far as we can without doing violence to our principles, or giving offense to others who are entitled to friendly consideration as well as they."

I shall only say here that my sisters' dresses, when made up, were not gaudy, but beautiful, and a model of good taste—which greatly pleased the generous, large-hearted giver.

XXIV.

ON THOUGHTLESSNESS.

OUR Molly, one evening, had been whisking about the room like a squirrel; and, just as we finished tea, she accidentally brushed Uncle Toby's gold spectacles off the corner of the table, where he sometimes laid them when eating.

"O!" cried she, in terror, "I did n't think;" and burst into a violent fit of weeping.

My wife sprang to save the glasses as they fell, but in vain; and so they were broken. Uncle Toby took up the frame into his hand, glanced at the hopeless ruin, and then, in the gentlest manner, called the disconsolate author of the mischief, and, placing her on his knee, drawing her head upon his shoulder, and putting his cheek to hers, proceeded to calm and soothe her agitated feelings. She was sufficiently punished; and he had not a single word of reproach for her.

Said he:

"Never mind the accident, darling. The spectacles were getting to be what we old folks call too young for me, as I have worn them for many years. The frame is not at all injured; and I know where I can have them filled to suit me. So you see the damage, after all, is not very great. As they are now, without any glasses to obstruct the vision, I judge they are about old enough for yourself. Let us try;" and he placed them over her nose. "O," said he, laughing, "they fail to fit, I see. They are quite too wide. Well, perhaps you can do without, any how."

Children's sorrows, however violent, are proverbially transient; and it took but a little while, by such treatment, to recover Molly's bright smiles, although she still uttered a sigh and sob, now and then, as she recurred to the event that had pierced her heart so cruelly.

"I am sorry to have my dear little girl's happiness interrupted," he, at length, resumed, "even for a moment; and yet we are often the better for our griefs. And, now, I want to tell you something about myself; and, if I can give you a lesson which you will commit to memory, we shall make this a profitable little accident"—and, as he said this, he stroked tenderly Molly's head, still reclining against him.

"I was a very thoughtless little boy; and often had to say, as you did a while ago, in excuse of my mishaps, 'I did n't think.' In this way I gave my parents much trouble. They had a rule which they tried hard to bring me to keep; and I wanted to keep it too, but nearly always failed to do so. The rule was, Have a place for every thing, and put every thing in its place. But often, when I wished to play, my ball was not to be found without a tedious and vexatious hunt; and, when I was to get ready for school, my Reader would be missing, or my slate, or slate-pencil. And thus I was always losing time, and troubling myself and others, for want of thought. It seemed to me that nobody else's things were half as prone to get out of the way, or hide themselves in obscure places, as mine.

"One day, I undertook to catch a flying butterfly in my hat; and chased it up and down for some time, when finally it sailed over a narrow ditch into a pasture-field. I knew the ditch was there, and had crossed it safely many times; but now I failed to think, and in I went, splashing myself, by the plunge, in a most ludicrous manner, and sticking fast in the mud. There I remained, perhaps, an hour, before any one heard my calls; and it seemed as if none would ever

come to my relief. At length, my father came and pulled me out, leaving one shoe to be fished up after I was landed. He could not help laughing at the grotesque figure I made, as I marched solemnly before him to the house, mortified beyond expression. 'My child, where have you been?" cried my mother, as she saw me coming. 'O,' said father, 'only planted in the ditch. I had to pull him out by the roots, to get him home again.' They thought I had had enough of punishment; but my father kindly, but firmly, repeated the lesson of carefulness, which as yet I had failed to learn. I was much improved by the event, but not entirely reformed. I jumped no more into ditches, but still did many things which a little thought would have caused me to avoid.

"At last the final lesson came, but in a way that placed in my heart a deep, rankling, life-long grief. Often I have felt that I would willingly lay down my life just to have the power to recall a few thoughtless words. I had a most lovely little sister, Minnie, whom I would not have harmed, purposely, for all the world. But not seldom I hurt her feelings, in our plays, by speaking hastily, without thinking. One afternoon she seemed unwell, and was a little fretful. 'O,' I exclaimed once, 'I would n't be a cry-baby.' It was like

an arrow piercing her heart; and, looking at me, she said, in the most piteous, pleading tones, 'I do n't want to be a cry-baby.' Instantly, I threw my arms around her neck, and spoke soothingly to her; but, alas! the wound had been given. We continued our play; but, all the evening, she appeared pensive, and sometimes I detected a tear in her eye. How my conscience smote me; and how I sought by kindness to heal the cruel blow! During the night she was taken with brain-fever, and she never knew me again. Two or three times she muttered, in her delirium, 'I do n't want to be a cry-baby.' My anxious mother did not understand it; but I did, and was almost distracted with grief. O, if she could only speak to me once more! The third day, she died. I kept my secret for a week after the funeral, until it seemed as if it would set me on fire. And then I told it to my mother, with a bursting heart. She was dreadfully pained; but yet did not reproach, or even reprove, me. But, stroking my hair, she only said, in a low, quiet tone of voice, 'She is happy now, my son.' After this lapse of time, I feel that I can not be content in the heavenly world without the privilege to ask my darling sister's forgiveness, which I was not permitted to ask on earth."

Here his emotions overpowered him, and all our hearts were deeply moved. Presently he resumed :

"Unless we go through life carefully and thoughtfully, we shall often give needless pain to others. I think by far the larger share of evil which men inflict upon their fellow-men is not willful, but results from want of thinking. Especially is this the case, sometimes, in not promptly paying the poor their wages for labor. The rich man, not feeling the loss or delay of a dollar himself, does not think how much a dollar is to the destitute; and, pressed for time, withholds the pittance for a day or two, and thus involves the laborer in sore distress and helpless suffering. O, if men would only think!

"And, now, I am sure my dear little girl will see the importance of always thinking, in whatever she does. And she must be as happy as she can; and try to make every body else happy."

Molly promised to bear it in mind. Then he kissed her, and gently put her off his knee. But it took more than a single promise to bring her entirely up to the mark, although, evidently, the lesson had deeply impressed her. Sometimes she would quaintly say, "I forgot

to think." But she may now be called a careful, thoughtful, little girl; and yet she has lost none of her native sprightliness of character or manner.

XXV.

ON AMUSEMENTS.

MY wife, one day, handed Uncle Toby the *Northwestern Christian Advocate*, and quietly directed his attention to a vigorous editorial on the subject of croquet and kindred games. After reading it, he said:

"I am glad to see this matter earnestly discussed. Good must result from it, I am sure. That amusements of some kind are an actual necessity, in general, can not be safely denied. Most physicians, I believe, consider them essential to health, and many scholars resort to them for relaxation of mind. I have been told, but can not vouch for the truth of it, that the German philosophers, whose profound thinking is the admiration of the world, devote a portion of almost every day to playing ball and other athletic games, and engage in them with all the eagerness of school-boys. But, unaccountably,

a large number of Christians unite in a persistent laying down of restrictions and prohibitions concerning things which are not revealed, and instead of recognizing the natural demand for amusement as an antidote to weariness and morbid feelings, and of regulating that demand by a quiet moral influence bearing upon it, they denounce it altogether, and thus drive the young especially into a kind of chronic defiance which leads them often where they ought not to go. One extreme is almost sure to be opposed by another. The error, I judge, arises from a confused notion of what is meant by being separate from the world. And so these good people forget that Christianity, in the proper sense, was intended for the world, and aims to draw into its service every thing in the world which is not polluted by willful sin. If there is a natural demand for amusement prevalent among men, it is not to be smothered, but developed and Christianized.

"Undoubtedly, there are persons who can very well dispense with games of amusement, having resources of recreation within themselves, such as the gift of conversation, devotional feelings, or a contemplative walk abroad. But these are the exception; the rule is the other way. It is, I think, sheer folly to say that the masses, even in the Church, have, or ever can have, any such

power. We must take human nature as it is, and try to fit our theories to it, instead of bending it to suit our theories. And, in this matter, it is not a question of amusement or no amusement which concerns the Church, but one merely of pure or impure recreations.

"For instance, men seem to have a propensity for cruel sports, and these, as a matter of course, are directly unchristian. Only a few days since, I saw a man on the street keenly enjoying the cries of a little dog, produced by his pinching its ear. And it is a strange fact that whenever nations have turned their attention to providing amusements for the people, these have nearly always been marked by extreme cruelty. Thus, in ancient times, Rome slew thousands of beasts, and even men, annually, in the gladiatorial combats, for the public entertainment. I do not mention the Grecian games, the Isthmian and Olympian, which were corrupting enough, but were, in reality, a part of their worship. In more modern times, we have the bull-fights of Spain, England, and Mexico, which were more than barbarous. And, likewise, we find individuals who undertake to establish amusements of public interest, falling into the very same method of pandering to the cruelty of the spectators, as, for example, the horse-racing, rat and dog fighting,

and the like, now existing in our own country. It is superfluous to say that no Christian can, for a moment, give countenance to any such things.

"There is a class of amusements which, perhaps, would not be otherwise sinful, but are made so by their inseparable associations. A prominent example of these is cards, always suggestive of gambling, so that even playing them for sport will be almost sure to realize the fulfillment of the apostolic declaration, 'Evil communications corrupt good manners.' Mr. Beecher recommends billiards, but would first divest them of all their usual surroundings, and confine them chiefly to the family circle. Dancing, too, has been well spoken of by some good people, who, however, would wholly withdraw it from the ball-room, and tolerate it only in the parlor. But it remains a question whether the customary associations have not so poisoned such amusements as to render it necessary to let them severely alone every-where.

"Again, some amusements are unhealthful, and ought to be avoided for this cause. Base-ball, for instance, is too violent to answer the purpose of a recreation at all, and is, moreover, justly falling into disrepute on other grounds as well.

"As to circuses, theaters, etc., they obtain their popularity by catering to bad taste, vulgar-

ity, and vicious sentiment, and can not, therefore, be safely patronized by Christians.

"Well, now, as to croquet, if I may express my opinion, it is, that this combines many qualities of a first-class recreation. It affords gentle exercise in the open air, and calls into use skill and discernment; it admits a chaste intercourse of the sexes, so that it is a fine social game, and it has contracted as yet no poisonous associations. The competition it excites is so mild that there is small temptation to discourtesy, unfairness, or impatience; although it may, of course, be abused in this respect. I certainly can see nothing inherently objectionable in it. And some of the most pious men I am acquainted with are plainly of the same opinion, since they engage in it themselves. And yet, I see that some rabid reformers have recently made desperate efforts to have it prohibited by Church rules. Indeed, I fear some of our religionists would speedily confine the world in a strait-jacket of their own manufacture, if they but had the power which they ardently covet.

"Having decided for ourselves as to what amusements we may lawfully indulge, we then must observe due caution as to excess. But this must be left to the judgment of every person, on his own responsibility. We can no more define

the boundary line of excess in this, than we can in eating. We may admonish a man to avoid gluttony, but, after all, he must determine when to stop. And just so in amusement.

"However, if we begin to lose relish, in any way, for the amusement in hand, we have certainly gone far enough. If we have become so attached to it that we waste time at it which ought to be otherwise employed, then we are going too far with it. Or, if we are intruding upon the customary seasons of devotion, or the needful hours of sleep, we have occasion to beware. And we have no right to follow amusements, at such time or place, or in such a way, as to give offense, but should always act on the principle declared by the apostle, 'If meat cause my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world stands,' and his admonition, 'Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God.'

"Such cautions as these we may profitably bear in mind; but we, individually, must judge of all details for ourselves. The boundary lines between vice and virtue can never be laid down, in all cases, as on a chart, so that, in amusements, as well as other affairs, we are to keep our hearts with all diligence, for out of them are the issues of life."

XXVI.

ON POPULARITY.

MR. SAMPLE having resigned the pastorate of the Congregational Church, in Bingtown, to accept a call in a distant city, and being on the eve of departure, the papers expressed much regret at losing him from the community, and the *Gazette* characterized him as "universally popular." On this Uncle Toby declared with much emphasis:

"I am sorry to observe this detraction from the character of a good man, under the semblance, and, indeed, no doubt, under the feeling of genuine kindness on the part of the writer. I entertain too high an opinion of Mr. Sample to believe that he is universally popular."

"Why, Uncle Toby," I exclaimed, with a surprise which was evidently shared by all, "what can you mean by that remark?"

He replied, "I am always suspicious of a universally popular man; for he is almost certain to

be a mere nondescript, exerting no positive influence for good, or against evil, in the world, or else a polished flatterer of the whims, caprices, and prejudices of all he comes in contact with, which is vastly worse. I regard Mr. Sample as a good man, and so I do not believe he is universally popular. The Quaker woman's comparison is not far from correct, 'you may know a good fruit-tree by the number of clubs lying around it.'"

"But," interrupted my father, "I certainly am acquainted with one notable exception, at least, in the person of the present commentator."

This unexpected compliment seemed to disconcert Uncle Toby a little, but he answered.

"Indeed, my dear brother, your fond partiality has misled you here. It is not for me to claim the merit of having accomplished much good, but I have, by no means, escaped cruel, and, as it seemed to me, wholly gratuitous, persecutions. I have frequently thought I had more than my share. I lost some of the most intimate friends I ever had, sober, discreet men, by my course in the temperance cause. For you know I have always been in favor of a vigorous, aggressive warfare upon the terrible evil, instead of a mere passive or timorous resistance. But this is quite enough concerning myself.

"If one is content to fall in with the general drift of things, and let the world take care of itself, he may probably have a smooth, easy time of it, and enjoy the reputation of being a very 'goodish' sort of a man. He may even be applauded for his harmlessness, because he does not stir the consciences of men, startle their prejudices, interrupt their slumbers, or disturb them in any way whatever, so that they have no need to oppose or persecute him. But it appears to me impossible to stem the currents of evil, without incurring the dislike of evil-minded men, no matter how loving and meek the spirit we manifest may be. It is so, even in the political world. In our own country, Washington himself was not universally popular. But how much more is it so in the moral world! Our Savior was very far from being universally popular. St. Paul, Luther, Wesley, and a host of others might be cited as examples. Christ laid it down as a general law concerning his followers, 'If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.' And again, 'If they have called the master of the house, Beelzebub, how much more them of his household.' Also, 'ye shall be hated of all nations, for my name's sake.' And St. Paul likewise declared, 'They that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.'

"Indeed, an active, energetic worker in any reform does well if he escapes the reputation of a madman. His views appear so impracticable, so visionary, so wholly out of the ordinary line of things, as to be attributed often to the disordered workings of a crazy brain. At one time, the Savior's relatives went out to force him into the house, for, said they, 'He is beside himself.' And at another time, when he was preaching, the Pharisees in the audience cried out, 'He hath a devil, and is mad. Why hear ye him?' Likewise, when St. Paul was fervently pleading his cause before Festus, the bewildered governor exclaimed, 'Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.' Even Mr. Bergh is regarded by some persons as a wild fanatic, for no other reason than that their blunted sensibilities can not appreciate the benevolence of his noble heart. Often, a genuine reformer is almost as lonely as if he were in the solitude of a wilderness. So to speak he inhabits another world from that where his contemporaries dwell, and is, in consequence, misunderstood and shunned.

"So much is this the case, that some devoted men, like Wyclif, standing out from amid the darkness of the Middle Ages, seem to have left no substantial fruits of their labors, there being no congenial soil upon which to sow the word of

life. And to go further back, it was only 'in the fullness of time,' that is, when the world had been, as far as possible prepared for it, that the advent of the Redeemer occurred. And, after all, coming to a people especially provided, and under instruction for ages, how little did he apparently accomplish as a teacher! 'He came unto his own, and his own received him not.' He seems to have suffered a grievous disappointment in this, and once he pathetically inquired, 'When the Son of man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?' And once again, when, at Capernaum, many of his disciples were offended by his discourse, and turned away from him, no more walking with him, how touching the mournful tone with which he addressed the twelve: 'Will ye also go away?' And none may ever know the bitter agony with which he lamented on Olivet the impending doom of the stubbornly rebellious city, Jerusalem, then in his view, and flashing in the splendors of the morning sunbeams."

I can not describe how this fervent utterance of Uncle Toby's thrilled us all.

"We must remember, however," he resumed, "that it is not every unpopular man, by any means, who is useful; nor is unpopularity, in any wise, promotive of usefulness."

This sudden transition greatly suprised us; but he speedily explained it.

"Some persons glory in their bluntness and disregard of the feelings and preferences of other people; but they glory in their shame. It is our duty to avoid all just causes of offense, and we should, on the contrary, seek the good will of men, and be as popular as we can without sacrificing principle, or abating our opposition to the wrong. When dislike, detraction, or unpopularity comes, we must bear it, as an unavoidable affliction; but we are not to choose it, nor heedlessly incur it, submitting to it only as a choice between necessary evils. And when the Savior gave us the precept, 'Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake: Rejoice and be exceedingly glad; for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you,' he did not mean that we were to seek persecution, but only to rejoice in it as the evidence that we are in the great warfare, and receiving the wounds of conflict which entitle us to reward. But the more we can induce to cease their persecution against us and go with us in support of the truth, the better. If affliction and suffering come upon us, let it be without our fault. We shall have enough

of it, necessarily, if we discharge our duties manfully. And then we may expect ample consolation under it, and ample reward for it."

This discourse of Uncle Toby sufficed to open up to me a new view of life. Afterward, the acquisition of fame and popularity did not seem of the first importance as previously, but to be obtained, if possible, in the way of right, and sacrificed, if necessary, to promote the good of mankind, and the cause of truth. I think the lesson is indelibly impressed upon my heart.

XXVII.

ON GENERAL EDUCATION.

MUCH excitement prevailed, at one time, in Bingtown, concerning the exclusion of Bible-reading from the public schools; and the question was to be referred to a vote of the people. A Romish priest, named Zellers, was conspicuously active in electioneering for the prohibition. My Uncle Toby took no prominent part against the movement; but constantly exerted a quiet influence to defeat it. The papers teemed with articles *pro* and *con*, in which the customary arguments were worked up into all varieties of shape, sometimes, indeed, bordering on the grotesque. A few evenings before the election, I asked Uncle Toby's opinion on the result.

"I think the exclusionists will be defeated," he replied. "The people will not be forced by priestly counsels to abandon the reading of the Bible in the public-schools, although they may,

at any time, let it fall into disuse, through neglect and carelessness. Besides, they pretty well understand the purport of the present attempt. Biblical instruction might, without any material detriment, be left to Sunday-schools, private schools, and Churches. So that the present issue is in itself of almost as little significance as the ill-advised efforts of certain zealots who expect to make this a Christian nation merely by thrusting the name of God into our National Constitution. But as a portion of a partially developed scheme, it becomes a question of vital importance. This scheme is first to exclude the Bible as a sectarian book; then to exclaim against the school system as a godless institution; and finally obtain a *pro rata* division of the public funds to support their Church schools; and, in addition, secure direct appropriations, from time to time, such as have for years been the bane and disgrace of the State of New York. Not long since, the *Freeman's Journal* spoke openly, in bold terms, of the 'disestablishment of the infidel school system.' When they succeed in this ultimate design, the education of that large class who would fall without the compass of sectarian influence would be wholly unprovided for; which would exactly suit the tactics of Romish proselytism. So we see the

present claim, urged in most localities, of desiring to unsectarianize the public schools is precisely the reverse of the truth.

"But the design reaches even much farther. This country is, by all means, to be brought under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Pope, as Mexico formerly was, and the South American Republics are now. And the recent vaporings of 'Father' Burke indicate that Romanists expect eventually to accomplish this result. The destruction of the public-school system is one of the means of reaching the aim herein. It will not be generally successful, if I correctly understand the temper and intelligence of the American people. But it will require vigilance to prevent it. And most truly did Thomas Jefferson declare that 'Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.'

"Our common-school system must not be overthrown. A general diffusion of intelligence, together with the influence of an earnest Christianity, is our only hope of safety. And in this particular, the value of our school system is incalculable, although it is, as yet, far from perfection. Go into those States of the Union where there are no public provisions for the education of the children; and you will find their condition to be darkness itself, compared with that of

those States where common-schools are established. I believe the common-school system alone would have made our late terrible rebellion impossible. In its absence, education is confined to the few who have the means of instruction at private schools, which are neither so numerous, so efficient, nor so well supported, as the private schools coexisting with public-schools, and, in reality, fostered by them. Where general ignorance prevails, there is sure to be indolence and apathy in regard to all education.

"Many of our most efficient men have possessed only the education afforded by public-schools, not having had the means of going farther. This, however, gave them an impulse which otherwise they would not have had; and was the positive ground of their success.

"It would be a great improvement in our public-schools if there could be a different kind of grading, to correspond with the capacity of the pupils. Now all are rigidly put through the same course—the poet, the mathematician, and the philosopher. Beyond the strictly elementary branches, this ought not to be. The same thing prevails in our colleges. There is a rigidly inflexible curriculum, which must be mastered before graduation. I do not believe the evil is without an appropriate remedy, and long to see

some accomplished educator take the matter effectually in hand.

"Also, it ought to be kept more fully in the view of both teachers and pupils that learning is only a *means* of education. That is, not attainment, but training, is the true purpose of educational institutions.

"The monastic feature of our colleges in the separation of the sexes is, I hope, destined to give way before the progress of intelligence. The nearer a school can be modeled like a family, the more natural and efficient it must be.

"As to colleges, our efforts lack concentration. We should have fewer; and those better sustained, instead of filling the land with withered sickly institutions. We are too ambitious and pretentious by half. Universities jostle one another; and yet, properly speaking, we have hardly a university in the whole country. We must become more humble and practical.

"Also, we ought to raise the dignity of colleges so that cheap titles would become impossible. The annual crop of doctors is becoming frightful. And a recent number of *The Methodist* disclosed a hideous state of things in regard to obtaining and conferring degrees. Even Harvard is degrading itself by distributing the degree of LL. D. with reference to position in-

stead of qualification. As to D. D., however, I do, at any rate, agree decidedly with the great and good Albert Barnes; although many pious men do not."

The election passed off quietly, and resulted in a signal defeat of the exclusionists, by a majority of two to one; which doubtless has settled the matter in Bingtown for a long time to come.

XXVIII.

ON THE WOMAN'S RIGHTS QUESTION.

WHEN the Young Men's Library Association of Bingtown were arranging for the Winter's lectures, some one proposed to invite Miss Susan B. Anthony to speak on the subject of woman's rights, during the course. The matter was debated among them, in quite a lively manner, without any immediate conclusion. One of the members took it into his head to sound Uncle Toby, by proxy; and, with this view, induced Nettie Gardner, whom he knew to be an especial favorite with my uncle, to visit us, at any convenient time, and try the experiment. So she came, one evening, just as we finished tea, to carry the project into action. She told him what was talked of, and them plumply asked him what he thought of it.

"O," said he, smiling, "my opinion on such a matter is of no consequence. The young men

must do what they think best, in arranging their plans."

She put on a mock-heroic air, and, mischievously shaking her finger at him, replied:

"Now, sir, see here. Your present bounden duty is to satisfy my womanly curiosity on this vital question, which lies at the very root of our civil and ecclesiastical liberties."

He laughed heartily at this, and replied:

"I heard Miss Anthony once. Her performance was not according to my uneducated taste; but probably others liked her better than I did."

With an arch look, and another threatening gesture, she said:

"I tell you, sir, this beating about the bush will never do. What makes you so contumacious and rebellious? I give you here a fair opportunity to unburden your mind upon this subject involving the destinies of our race, and you are breathlessly expected to improve it to the uttermost. Now, ready!" and she paused, as if in suspense.

He keenly enjoyed her spirited sallies, and presently said:

"I assure you, my mind is by no means burdened with the theme. If women desire to establish their right to navigate a ship, or shoe a horse, I have not the least objection; although

I am unable to perceive the necessity of it, since, as Mrs. Swisshelm has justly remarked, there is nothing to prevent their doing so now, if they want to. Also, if Providence has not assigned woman any definite sphere, or has failed to place her in it, the sooner the sad omission is rectified by Miss Anthony and her colaborers the better."

"Shall we vote?" urged Nettie.

"If it is necessary, I have no objection to that either. Women could vote, probably, as well as sit on a throne. But those who think voting a sovereign panacea for all their real and imaginary evils would certainly find themselves much deceived. Many do vote who are far from finding it any personal advantage to them. And I really doubt whether, if the ballot were conferred to-day, it would produce the least change in the status of woman's affairs or relationships."

"That suits me," said Nettie. "I don't want the trouble of voting. Women generally do not desire it; except, we would like to have a chance to vote down these strong-minded women into some quiet, useful occupation. I should want to set them to spinning and weaving carpets. There, now; I have committed myself, which I did n't intend to do."

"The methods employed by these women in

the lecturing business," resumed Uncle Toby, "are, I think, poorly calculated to insure success. They denounce man, in general terms, as a heartless tyrant, and represent woman as a slave, trampled under foot; whereas, we all know that this is untrue, to employ the mildest term. Sometimes they deem it needful to denounce the Scriptures likewise, because of its explicit teachings. Little do they reflect upon the fact that the Bible alone elevates woman to a real companionship with man; which is denied her wherever the Bible is not found. The nearer we are to keeping the divine appointment, the happier will both man and woman be. And it was with the deepest regret that I observed Mr. Beecher trying to explain away the Scripture instruction, concerning the relation of man and woman, by forced and violent interpretations; although St. Paul declares that man is the head of the woman, as Christ is the head of the Church — not absolutely, of course, but emblematically.

"Now, taking the Bible to guide us, we find the divine appointment to be about this: A man is, officially, the head of his household; as a President is the official head of our nation. This does not involve a personal inferiority of woman, any more than the President's position

gives him a right to claim a personal superiority over any citizen of the country.

"There is an equality of man and woman. But each has a peculiar sphere; and woman's sphere is, in reality, the higher, as God arranged it, because hers is the empire of the heart. She is entitled to superior homage here; and I do not hesitate to declare that she has it. Woman's influence, in all departments, is paramount to all others combined. The world, in regard to Christian civilization, is just as she makes it; for the heart, her seat of empire, controls all things, for good or evil. Point me, if you can, to a single eminent man who did not owe his greatness to his mother, and who was not willing to acknowledge it. Take, for example, the simple tribute of Thomas H. Benton—one of the greatest statesmen our country has yet produced—to the influence of his mother:

"'My mother asked me never to use tobacco; I have never touched it from that time to the present day. She asked me never to gamble, and I have never gambled; I can not tell who is losing in games that are being played. She admonished me, too, against hard drinking; and whatever capacity for endurance I have at present, and whatever usefulness I have, I attribute to having complied with her pious and correct wishes. When I was seven years of age she asked me not to drink, and then I made a resolution of total abstinence; and that I have adhered to it through all time, I owe to my mother.'

"Is not this a much higher praise than if he could have said, 'My mother was a great politician, and succeeded in securing the passage of laws by which I obtained a large estate?'

"When Napoleon bewailed the fickleness of the French people, how forcibly did the noble woman with whom he was conversing reply, 'Sire, they want mothers!' And this is our want, in America, to-day. It is not voting women we need, nor lecturing women; but mothers.

"Next to a mother's influence comes that of a true wife. There is this difference. A mother's influence is molding, or formative; a wife's, directive. And next comes the array of female teachers. And, also, women may be properly employed in all light occupations to which she is naturally adapted. Female influence was intended to pervade the whole mass of society—not like a storm or whirlwind, as Miss Anthony and others seem to suppose; but like the quiet sunlight, imparting life and energy to the whole system of nature. All can not, of course, be wives and mothers; but the great majority may be, and are. And, as to the comparatively few exceptions, they certainly could find better employment than the Amazonian warfare some of them are carrying on against the normal condition of things.

"It ought to be plainly evident to all that the organization of society can not be framed merely with reference to exceptional cases, with any degree of propriety or benefit. And, also, that the care of our families must, in the very nature of the case, devolve chiefly on the mothers; and that this care is wholly incompatible with man's sphere of action, into which these lecturers are so anxious to obtrude themselves. If women must vote, like men, they must actively electioneer, like men, or else they must fall behind in the objects they seek to accomplish by voting. And, besides, if they must in all things be as men are, their present peculiar privileges will be withdrawn in great measure, and they will have to take the rough-and-tumble of life, just as men do. I repeat, that if they abdicate their present position, and come into man's sphere of duty, it will not be an elevation or an advancement, but an actual descent. In order to reach man's station, woman must come down below where she is now.

"Women will never consent, generally, to have this descending privilege of mixing in political squabbles conferred upon them. If a law were passed, to-day, giving them the suffrage, I do not believe one in fifty would avail herself of it. And sure I am, that if the proposition were

to be submitted now to the American women, that they might settle it by a single vote, there would be a majority of nine-tenths against it."

"Good!" exclaimed all the ladies, together.

"That there may be improvements made in the laws of property I do not doubt; for there are still some remnants of feudalism remaining. But the work is advancing, and will be accomplished, I think, much more speedily without the suffrage than it would be with it.

"And that some men are domestic tyrants I grant; but they would not be cured by their wives having the right of suffrage. Some women are domestic tyrants also; and, although their husbands have a right to vote, it proves a poor defense against a stormy temper, a cutting tongue, or a shower of invectives.

"I am sure a woman ought, in all cases, to have a clear general understanding of her husband's business affairs; so that she may regulate her expenses thereby; and also that, in the event of his death, she would not be thrown into bewilderment in settling the estate. Our law assigns to a widow the prior right of administration, which is as it should be. But she needs to be qualified to exercise the right when it becomes necessary. Happy is the man who has in his wife a judicious counselor in all things.

"Some men thoughtlessly, and others willfully, keep their wives in a humiliating dependence for supplies of money. A high-minded woman would often rather go destitute than to beg, even from her husband, or be forced to render a particular account of every item of expenditure. I am now speaking of a true wife. If a man is foolish enough to marry a fashionable butterfly, who knows nothing about money except as a means of extravagant display, and who lives only to flutter, he must bear the consequences. But every judicious woman ought to have means at her own disposal, and be trusted with their exclusive management.

"I think this woman's rights movement will break down under its own absurdity; and I doubt whether men need give it much attention. It should be left chiefly to the good sense of women themselves. Especially no set attacks should be resorted to; and I was quite amused with the smart chastisement Rev. John Todd received at the hands of that vigorous spinster, Gail Hamilton, although both his assault and her defense were in bad taste and out of character.

"And now you have my opinion, Miss Nettie," he continued, with a good-natured laugh; "does it gratify your 'womanly curiosity?'"

"O, perfectly," she replied. "You have

acquitted yourself admirably, indeed, since I got you started with so much trouble, and are now entitled to an honorable discharge."

She took her leave, much pleased with the success of her maneuver. Miss Anthony was not invited; nor have we ever had, in Bingtown, any specific lecture on the topic of woman's rights, although many of us have secretly wished that Anna Dickinson would happen here in the course of her wanderings, as we would like to have the privilege of once listening to an accomplished representative of her sex.

XXIX.

ON THE METHODIST ITINERANCY.

UNCLE TOBY, sitting at the table, looking over the list of appointments in the *Advocate*, quietly remarked:

"I see that our minister is removed, and we get a fresh transfer, from Baltimore, in his stead. I knew, three months ago, that the matter was determined upon. I find myself falling into the rear of the march of improvement, in regard to the itinerancy, as I am still attached strongly to the old-fashioned plan. I must quicken my steps, or be left behind. There are, it seems to me, several influences at work undermining the itinerancy; and the next generation will probably see it entirely abandoned."

"Why," said I, "that would break up the Methodist Church,"

"Not necessarily," he replied; "Methodism is very flexible, and easily accommodates itself to changing circumstances. It consists of more

than one distinctive feature; and if itinerancy has had its day, we shall have to let it go."

"But," I rejoined, "that would abolish the episcopacy; and that would destroy the Church."

"You forget that, in England, Methodism has never had an episcopacy; and I do not know why, if need be, we could not exist and prosper without it, as well as they. Besides, the itinerancy might cease, and yet the episcopal office remain, as in the Protestant Episcopal Church. In that event it would become diocesan; and the late action of the General Conference concerning episcopal residence squints that way very strongly, at any rate.

"Already, the episcopacy has virtually lost its appointing power. In regard to all the important charges, the presiding bishop does not usually appoint, but only ratify an existing contract between preachers and people, just as a magistrate acknowledges a deed of lands. I remember when Bishop Clark was editor of the *Ladies' Repository*, he had a regular correspondent—in the New York East Conference, I believe—who claimed that for years he had practiced making out a list of appointments before every session, which would almost invariably be confirmed by the bishop afterward; that is, his conjectures would turn out to be correct.

"I think, too, I can observe a growing dissatisfaction, every year, among the preachers who have not a good tact or facility of negotiating, and are, therefore, compelled to take what is called in conference parlance 'a back-seat.' I was talking with a good brother, only a few days ago, who was seriously threatening to locate because, as he remarked, a 'young man has no chance in the —— Conference.' And, also, there is, I think, an increasing jealousy on the part of conference members against roving, place-seeking transfers, whose course can perhaps be reconciled with the apostolic admonition, 'In honor preferring one another,' although I confess my own inability to do it. All this negotiating, seeking position, etc., looks very natural; but whether it is very religious or not must be left for the decision of better casuists than I. It certainly gives a Methodist Conference somewhat the appearance of a political caucus to one who has an inside view of its workings; and it surely tends to break down the itinerant plan.

"To the same end is the station system, as distinguished from circuits. In this the English Methodists have been wiser than we; for they have no stations. But some of our preachers would consider it a stigma and disgrace to be sent to a circuit.

"The extension of time from two to three years bears in the same direction. It is vain to suppose that this action is a finality. The matter is only pausing here. The Church South has abolished all limitation, and we shall follow their example erelong. And it is a plain proposition, that among other things essential to the integrity of an itinerant system prominently stands a short limitation.

"What effect the lay element may exert in the matter remains to be seen. I know prominent laymen who are avowedly in favor of abolishing the itinerancy as soon as possible. And if it should, in the opinion of a majority, become expedient to do so, we shall simply have to adapt ourselves to the situation, and go on with our work. It ought, I think, to be all the one way or all the other. The present half-appointing and half-bargaining system always must produce an injurious friction and jealousy which will materially mar our efficiency and retard our progress."

XXX.

ON CHURCH UNITY.

THERE came a certain man to Bingtown, who preached a course of sermons chiefly directed against Church creeds and Church sects, which he bitterly denounced as unchristian, the former being mere human inventions, and the latter, schismatic. I observed, however, that, in his discourses, he was as dogmatic in his statements of doctrine, and as ready to draw deductions from the Scriptures to support those statements, as others were, or even as creeds themselves. I could not perceive any material difference between a written creed and a verbal one, if they both treat the Scriptures precisely in the same manner, using them as the basis of arguments and doctrinal definitions, instead of confining every thing to the mere literal language therein contained, without addition or interpretation. But on the other point, relating to Church divis-

ions or denominations, he puzzled me somewhat by maintaining the necessity of a union among all Christians. Next morning, after the completion of the series, I referred the matter to Uncle Toby for an explanation, upon which he very readily entered.

"These men," said he, "who are making a specialty of this cry of Church unity are among the most violent schismatics I know of, being, in general, filled with bigotry, intolerance, and bitterness. Irony and denunciation are their favorite weapons in promoting what they claim to be the cause of truth. Moreover, I regret to say, their main characteristic tenet is the old theory of salvation by works, which St. Paul so ardently condemns, especially in his espistle to the Romans. It is not by faith alone, but by faith and obedience manifested by submitting to the rite of immersion, that the soul attains a sense of pardon. Their able leader was wont to illustrate it in this way: 'I was born a subject of Great Britain. I believed there was such a country as the United States. But this belief did not change my relation. I took passage, and came over the ocean, landing on the soil of the United States. Neither yet was my relation changed. I was still an alien. I was finally told to go to yonder court-house, and take the

oath of allegiance, in the prescribed form and manner. I did so, and then, for the first time, I knew what it was to be a recognized citizen of the United States. And thus it is in the spiritual kingdom of Christ. We may believe the Gospel, but that does not change our relation. Only when we take the oath of allegiance, by the act of immersion, do we become, from aliens and strangers, fellow-citizens with the saints and members of the household of faith.' Now, this exceedingly ingenious argument must fail completely when we consider that the supposed exact analogy between an earthly government and the spiritual kingdom of God, which is within us, exists only in the fancy. So that it does not follow that if, in the former, a material or outward act is needful to a new relationship, a similar outward act, instead of a purely spiritual act, is necessary to a change of spiritual relationship. And the fancied analogy is wholly unsupported by the Word of God, of which they profess so high a reverence. And the length to which they carry this matter, at least in some cases, may well be illustrated by a fact which came almost directly under my own observation. One of these men declared, in the pulpit, that if a man should die unbaptized, in a place where baptism by immersion could not be performed, as, for instance, along the route to

California across the plains, he having once had the opportunity to be immersed and failing to improve it, salvation is then impossible, however sincere the repentance, or genuine the faith, of the dying man might be! And I was once credibly informed by a friend that one of these teachers, ridiculing the doctrine of the Trinity, exclaimed, 'Who is this Holy Ghost? I don't know him, and have no use for him.'

"You are now prepared, I think, to affix the proper value to the generous efforts of these men who thus plant themselves on unscriptural ground, and then shrilly call upon all denominations to disband, give up their tenets of faith, and come over to them. Surely we do well to decline all their gracious invitations peremptorily. We want no unity based on false teachings.

"It is not, at any rate, needful to the highest form of Christian unity that all denominations should come into the same form of organization, any more than it is needful for the unity of a city that all its people should dwell in the same house or belong to the same family; or than it is necessary to our national unity that the various States should surrender their local governments to form a consolidation. There may well be various denominations, having peculiar characteristics, just as individual Christians

have. True Church unity consists in having, in common, the spirit of Christ as the Head over all, in such a degree as to exclude all uncharitableness, bigotry, and sectarian hostility. You can find in a volume of Mr. Wesley's sermons an admirable discourse on this point.

"We can not, to be sure, deny that there still exist some things to mar and disfigure Christian unity among the Churches. Most conspicuous of these are close communion among our Baptist brethren, pulpit exclusiveness among the Episcopalians, and the interdiction of hymns among the United Presbyterians. But, sooner or later, these foul excrescences must disappear; and, even now, we have the most effectual protests, from prominent men in those very sects, such as Baptist Noel, Spurgeon, Tyng, and George H. Stuart. Many of their members now breathe an earnest spirit of Christian charity and brotherhood, though, in some respects, trammeled by denominational shackles. The restrictions will become more and more galling, until they will finally be thrown off altogether. Christian Associations, and such like unsectarian auxiliaries, must exert a strong influence in dispelling the mists of bigotry, and, as the prophet beautifully expresses it, 'we shall see eye to eye when the Lord brings again Zion.'

"As to the unity of faith, which is inseparable from Church unity, it consists of a common reception of the fundamental doctrines of truth that are essential to salvation; and admits of a wide difference in regard to minor, and merely subordinate points. Those who deny the work of grace in the heart, with kindred doctrines, have no right to complain if they are not recognized as belonging to the fellowship of saints.

"Also, in a general way, if a member becomes entirely out of harmony with the acknowledged standards of doctrine, in any particular branch of the Church, so far as to produce discord which would be fatal to the peace and order thereof, the right of exclusion belongs to it, in order to avoid schism in the body. But an exclusion for heresy is quite rare in our days. Bishop Whitehouse, in the Cheney case, in Chicago, found a thorny road to travel, even in the Episcopal Church, as to discipline for alleged heresy. And not long since, I was told of a ludicrous case which once occurred in one of the Ohio Conferences. A preacher was accused at a particular session of departing from the standard doctrinal works. The matter being brought up on the passage of character, he was clearly shown before the conference to hold the sentiments attributed to him. Then said the presiding bishop, 'Well,

brethren, what shall we do with him?' The question of a penalty had not before occurred, and no one could think of a precedent. So, all were silent, until a witty brother extricated the conference from its absurd dilemma, by rising and solemnly proposing, 'Mr. President, I move that we burn him!' The case disappeared in a laugh.

"It devolves, however, upon every Church to keep itself pure from all immorality, by utterly refusing to tolerate any known sin or willful misconduct on the part of any of its members. A true Christian unity or liberality does not, in any degree, harmonize with a lax moral discipline. And I regret to see the increased worldliness with which the Church is in danger of being deluged in many places. Mr. Wesley deplored the very possibility of rich men ever becoming necessary to us, regarding such an event as the doom of Methodism. And, in this money-making age, it is to be feared that moneyed men often exert a controlling influence, not merely in the business affairs of the Church, but in all spiritual matters as well, and that, too, not by virtue of their spirituality, but of their wealth. When money rules truth, the mastery is apt to be severe. If professing Christians can ever be induced, in good faith, to consecrate all their substance to the Lord, all will be well. Otherwise, disaster must come.

The trouble is, we are so prone to indulge a feeling of proprietorship, instead of remembering that we are only stewards, and will be held responsible for embezzlement, if we employ our Lord's money merely for our own selfish ends. In proportion as the spirit of gain and of worldliness flows into the Church will the spirit of God withdraw his purifying influence; until, before we are aware, we may be called upon to write 'Ichabod' upon all our altars. May God in mercy save us from the fearful peril that is apparently lying in wait!"

XXXI.

ON CONSISTENCY.

THE Bingtown *Sentinel* one morning contained a very caustic criticism on the course pursued by the *Gazette*, in regard to a certain measure of city improvement, which at first was zealously advocated by both papers; but which had, of late, been opposed by the *Gazette*, on the apparently sincere ground of better information. The *Sentinel* denounced, in no measured terms, the "base inconsistency" of the *Gazette*; and strongly intimated that a bribe lay at the bottom of it. Whereupon, Uncle Toby remarked:

"This is extremely unfair. I would not give much for a man who is consistent according to the notions of the *Sentinel*. They remind me of the story of a witness in court, who exclaimed, 'Did I say that horse was sixteen *feet* high?' 'Yes, sir, you did.' 'Well, then, I shall have to stick to it.'

"Consistency, in the true meaning of the term, does not require us never to change our views on evidence, but the exact contrary. A consistent man will never wed his errors; but will always hold himself ready to abandon a mistake when discovered, however earnestly he may have advocated it before. It is only pride of opinion that produces inflexibility; and this bars the way effectually against any increase of wisdom. A changeless man resembles a book stereotyped full of errors, which are thus placed beyond the reach of correction.

"We have a right, of course, to demand steadiness in every one; and that changes shall be sincere, and well weighed, and not hasty, or venal. St. Paul gives us a forcible admonition on this point: 'That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.' One who is perpetually vacillating is of very little account in the world.

"But, on the other hand, we should always bear in mind, that, in every thing, we are liable to err—sometimes by infirmity of judgment, and again from want of proper information—and we must not resist the light when it comes. We should have always a fixed standard of opinion

and action, adopted with the utmost care. But that very standard may require precisely contrary acts under contrary circumstances, or views. For example, we hear that a man has shot another. We condemn the act. But it was in self defense, and needful in order to save his own life. Then we acquit. But he was engaged in an unlawful act when he was assailed. Condemnation again. But he thought he was in the line of his duty as an officer of the law, and tried to explain to his assailant, who would not listen, but still aimed to take his life. Acquittal again. Now it is plain that the judgment, in passing upon these various phases of the case and reversing its decision at every step, can not be properly regarded as inconsistent.

"Sometimes, too, we may not be in a condition to judge correctly; or have decided too hastily. Then, consistent principle requires that we change whenever the fact appears. A woman lost her cause before King Philip, of Macedon. 'I appeal,' said she. 'Appeal?' exclaimed the astonished king, 'to whom?' 'From King Philip drunk, to King Philip sober.' Her wit pleased him so well that he granted her a rehearing next day, and gave the decision in her favor. It would be strange to call Philip an inconsistent ruler on this circumstance.

"It may occasionally occur—though rarely, if we are careful—that we will be under the necessity of changing even our standard of thinking and acting. However, in conversion, this is always more or less the case. And herein, there is not the least inconsistency in changing. Saul the persecutor was transformed into Paul the apostle. But in all the essential elements of his nature and character he remained the same man—zealous, determined, heroic, conscientious. Who, having any just appreciation of the case and of the man, would charge inconsistency upon him? Lord Lyttleton derived from the conversion of Saul an unanswerable proof of the Christian religion.

"There is one standard of action we need never change—the Gospel standard of a loving heart. 'Love, and do as you please,' said an eminent minister. And, even as a standard of thinking, it is invaluable. It is only love which perceives the true relations of things, at least so far as they concern rational beings. And he is most likely to be an earnest and sincere thinker—all things considered—who judges from the heart, rather than he who deals only in the cold abstractions of the intellect.

"I admire a man who has the courage to come out boldly, and say, 'I was mistaken.'

But one who shuts his eyes and deliberately walks into a ditch for no other reason than that he happened to start in that direction, has small claim upon our respect.

"And this is precisely the condition of the Romish Church to-day, in consequence of the claim to infallibility. We are fairly entitled to gather up all the mistakes, errors, and enormous sins of past ages, and lay them upon her reluctant shoulders, until that claim is formally relinquished. She does, indeed, attempt slyly to distribute them along the way and drop them out of sight, without abating her arrogant assumptions, but we have a right to insist imperatively that they be carried along with her to the end, in all their responsibilities.

"And so with stubborn men who will not surrender an opinion once entertained, or abandon a course once entered upon, lest they be liable to the charge of inconsistency. A curious medley will they have, indeed, at the end of their course through the world, as their peculiar personal property. And the matter is made worse with them by their precipitancy in forming opinions at the first, without due reflection; which rashness is, I think, nearly always connected with this conceited firmness."

XXXII.

ON DECISION.

I DO not know whether I was ever more thoroughly vexed in my life than I was with a client I had, in a highly important land suit involving a question of title as affected by the statute of limitations. I had time and again set him, under specific directions, to collecting the necessary parol evidence; but he made no progress, because he failed to grasp the matter with a will, but tamely allowed it to pass along, until my patience was almost at an end. So, one afternoon, I gave him a remarkably warm office exhortation, and went home quite out of temper. Uncle Toby observed my cloudy looks, which, to be sure, I ought not to have carried with me; and, learning the cause, he remarked:

"I believe half the energies of the world are squandered in this very way. Sometimes a want of decision comes from imbecility—as we often

hear it said of such a one, 'He has no mind of his own;' or, 'He can never make up his mind.' But more commonly it is the result of sheer indolence, and is sure to be flanked by the false plea of want of time. I have known entire communities, even large cities, thoroughly infected with it, so that no efficient business could be done outside of a certain routine. Of course, public enterprise was wholly wanting, and progress at a stand-still. 'Young America' has invented a word which, with due limitations, expresses the thing, 'Old-fogyism.' It is slovenliness, dullness, Rip-Van-Winkleism (if I also may coin a word),—a selfish love of ease, a dislike of self-sacrifice, and an utter disregard of the convenience or rights of others. And it is as far removed from Christian principle as it is from business promptness and vigor. The Scriptures enjoin diligence in business, as well as fervor in spirit, and serving the Lord.

"So it is, then, in the ordinary avocations of life. But it extends its fatal lethargy to the powers of thought likewise. It disqualifies one for taking firm hold of a subject, and investigating its principles and bearings. Elijah thus had to arouse the Jews: 'How long halt ye between two opinions? If Baal be God, serve him; but if the Lord be God, then serve him.'

I have known American citizens of this stamp excuse themselves from all conversation in regard to the interests of the country by saying, 'O, I never take any interest in politics;' as if that were any thing to the credit of an American citizen endowed with the high trust of an elective franchise. The plain fact was, they were too stupid and indolent to think enough to have any ideas on this or any other subject, and so contented themselves with an effeminate nonentity. It would be all the same to them, I suppose, if they lived in Tartary, so that they had enough to eat and to wear, and were free from active care.

"Some men are subject to this infirmity who are endowed with qualities which otherwise would insure success. Thus, General M'Clellan probably possesses all the elements of a great general except this one of decision. And for this lack Mr. Lincoln was, after long hesitation, compelled to supersede him. He was disgracefully repulsed at Yorktown by a display of wooden guns; and lost, at the battle of Harrison's Landing, an almost unobstructed chance of entering Richmond. Many, even General Philip Kearney, impeached his patriotism, but I think unjustly. Want of decision was the trouble, and it will ruin any man in the same way.

"Another form of the evil is found in religious vacillation. For example, we find persons disposed to join the Church at every revival meeting; but they are always off again in a few months at the farthest. They have no force, no stability, and are puffed about by every breeze. Like a vessel without a rudder drifting with the currents, so they are passively moved by every excitement and influence. These are met with in every community; and, I suppose, have to be borne with, and kept along as well as may be. It is perhaps better to be religious spasmodically than not at all; and perchance these characters may at last stumble into the heavenly world—perhaps there to be remodeled into infantile natures, as it were, to begin the eternal life with. But sometimes they do much harm here by bringing reproach upon religion through their wretched vacillation, and deterring some thereby who otherwise could be brought into the Redeemer's fold. One great trouble is that they are always very conspicuous when they have the devotional fit on them, unless they are made to take a back-seat, and then they are entirely killed off. So that the treatment of such cases becomes a source of the greatest perplexity, sometimes, to the earnest minister, anxious to remove all stumbling-blocks out of the way."

I was gratified with this talk, because it restored my equanimity, and, besides, made me feel somewhat more charitable toward my client—who, however, continued to give me considerable trouble in the same way.

XXXIII.

ON PUNCTUALITY.

MOLLY received a tardy-mark at school, much to her mortification, such a thing being quite out of the ordinary line of things with her. But this time it was clearly without remedy; for she had wasted the morning hours when it could have been avoided. She was slightly ill, probably, and so felt languid. In the evening she was quite downcast about it; and Uncle Toby called her to him, as he is wont to do when she has her childish troubles, in order to console and instruct her. Said he:

"I am glad my little girl does not like tardy-marks. They are not at all a nice thing to have around; and yet I have known little boys and girls who did not seem to care for them. It is a very bad thing for boys and girls not to care; and I am pleased that our dear Molly does care. But I hope she will care more for the cause of the mark than for the mark itself. And, now, I

will tell you what we will do with this fellow. We will not let him have any company, but make him stand up there by himself, and see if he will not get tired and ashamed to be standing up there all alone to bear witness of a single slip by my little girl."

The idea amused Molly, and dispersed all her melancholy. I think I have never seen an old man so skillful as Uncle Toby in helping children over their griefs. They seem to feel instinctively that he sympathizes with them tenderly, and can tell them just what to do.

"We must all try to learn," he continued, "to be always on time in every thing. I have known some people who never did any thing on time; and so they were always hurried, and had no leisure for any enjoyment. They were perpetually getting things all twisted and tangled and mixed, for want of doing them in proper season; so that it took all their spare moments to get them unraveled. I have sometimes seen such persons come to church in great haste, just in time to hear the benediction, and retire much mortified in consequence."

We all laughed heartily at this, and Molly was fairly convulsed.

"Now, it is just as easy to do a thing at the right time as at the wrong time, and when you

get into the way of it, it is a great deal easier. Some one has said that, short as life is, there is time enough to do every thing, if we do every thing in its time. Mr. Wesley said of himself, 'Always in haste, but never in a hurry.' And thus he got through with more work in his life than almost any other man ever did. He effected it by doing every thing in season. He was always exact to a minute. And it is so with any one who does much good in the world. He that lets things go at loose ends will never amount to much.

"That great man, General Washington, was very exact, likewise, in all his plans and actions. Sometimes, when he had invited guests, and these would be a few moments late, and so find him already at table, he would pleasantly call out, 'Gentlemen, my cook never inquires whether the guests have arrived, but whether the hour has.'

"And so, at home, or at school, or Church, or Sunday-school, or at play, never be behind time. We owe this to ourselves, so that we will not be hurried, nor lack a spare moment when we want it. And we owe it to others also; so that we will not trespass on their time. Were you ever in a railroad depot where you noticed every body was uneasy, and even the children restless and fretful?"

"Yes, indeed, Uncle Toby," answered Molly; "I was down the other day, and every body was looking out, and could n't be still; and I could n't get any body to talk to me at all."

"Well, what was the matter?"

"Why," said she, "the train was behind time."

"Just so," he replied; "and some wanted to get to their business; others were afraid of missing connection with other roads; some, perhaps, were going to see sick relatives who were in danger of dying before they could reach them; and others were afraid of landing at their destination in the night, because of the delay,—and all this uneasiness from one train behind time.

"And, again, here, perhaps, is a person who is in great haste to get on. But he relies on a clock which has fallen back from the true time. He misses the train by a few minutes; and he has to wait over, perhaps to his great loss. And his loss may cause loss to others; and thus much mischief be done just by one clock being too slow, and causing one man to be behind time.

"And, now, will not my dear little girl try always to be on time in every thing, so that

she can do great good herself, and not hinder others? I am sure she will."

Molly gave the promise, which I think she has faithfully kept. He kissed her as usual—for thus he always sealed his lessons of instruction to children—and then took her with him for an evening walk.

XXXIV.

ON CHURCH MUSIC.

WE younger members of the Church of Bingtown took it into our heads to improve the singing, which, it must be confessed, was drawling and wretched enough. We knew there was any number of good voices in the congregation, and so determined to organize a choir. With the approval of the pastor it was done. We soon collected money enough to buy a fine reed organ, without calling upon any of the old staid pillars of the society. It was duly ordered, and, one Saturday afternoon, was installed into its appropriate office in the audience-room. To our utter surprise, it aroused a perfect storm of opposition from some of the older members, who deemed it a sacrilege, and even threatened to leave the Church, unless the intruder were incontinently turned out of doors. One old man felt himself peculiarly called to the work of protesting, in the most

emphatic manner he could devise, but which, to us, appeared in the highest degree comical. He would come in early, seat himself in apparent unconsciousness of its presence, and put on a look of the most devout meditation, until the commencement of the voluntary, when he would start up as if frightened, cast an apprehensive glance at the brass-reeds as if it were a masked battery suddenly uncovered, then seize his hat, and shy around it, as if afraid it would explode and blow every thing to pieces. Then leaving the church, he would attend service at the United Brethren Church. At first this annoyed as well as amused us. But when he had repeated the farce several times, we became as willing to have him leave as John Wesley once was to dispense with his brother Charles, in a conference, at which a brother spoke, and, leaving the point, digressed into personal experience. "Stop that brother! stop that brother!" exclaimed Charles, "If you do n't stop that brother, I will leave the house." To this John responded by speaking gently to the brethren, "Reach him his hat!"

The matter finally culminated in a Church-meeting, called to consider what was best to be done. Uncle Toby attended, and during the discussion, he hit upon a happy expedient, as he

was apt to do in cases of difficulty. This was simply to apply the custom of the Church to the instrument, and, accordingly, admit it into the usual six months' probation, and then into full membership, or not, as might be judged best. The novel plan was unanimously adopted; and thus our organ was put on its good behavior, in regard to its present and future standing in the Church. The next morning, at breakfast, we discussed the prospects of the new probationer, and Uncle Toby said:

"The opposition to the organ is, I am sure, a mere matter of prejudice, which will wear away in six months, and I would not be surprised if the good brethren who so dislike it now should be at that time among the warmest advocates of its retention. Meanwhile, at suitable opportunities, I shall converse with them on the subject, and I do not apprehend any trouble in convincing them. They are earnest, pious men, but their prejudices are shocked by the novelty. And if it really should come to a choice between losing or seriously offending them, and sacrificing the organ, I would not hesitate to favor its expulsion.

"In the Psalms, we find the most explicit mention of musical instruments of various kinds, as an adjunct of both private and public worship.

If they could be made to answer the purposes of devotion in that day, and in the hands of David, I know not why instruments may not be used in like manner now. And I think the minister was decidedly more witty than wise who, offended by the presence of a bass-viol in the gallery, announced, 'We will fiddle and sing the 115th Psalm.'

"But we must always bear in mind that mere harmony of sound is not devotion. Instruments may serve as auxiliaries to guide the expression, but can never become chief without injury, for this would lead directly to formalism. The devotional sentiments, without which public worship is little better than a mockery, must, in all cases, come from the heart. And I can not help condemning the usual method of making up Church choirs merely with reference to the voices which are to compose its performances, rather than to the religious characters of the members. I have actually seen choirs under the leadership of lawyers and others who made not the slightest pretext to piety, and who often would, during prayer, be arranging for the next piece. And, in such cases, the Church was actually gratified that men of such respectable standing in the outside world has been induced to conduct the singing. While I would not prohibit unconverted persons

from joining in the music, any more than from repeating the Lord's Prayer, if they wish, yet the leaders and most of the members of a choir ought to be truly pious persons. We might as well assign praying, which in reality is no more a branch of devotion than singing, to another band of thoughtless youths, as to surrender the songs of Zion to such giddy flirting creatures as I have seen at certain churches fidgeting around even during the sermon. And, I assure you, if you have organized such a band here, you may count on my determined influence to have it wholly abolished; for I can not endure such things."

"Well, Uncle Toby," said I, "you need fear nothing of the kind. Most of our choir are religious young people, with some older members of the Church. As to our organist, Nellie Willis, I am sure you can have no objection to her."

"No, indeed. She is a remarkably amiable, religious girl, as well as an accomplished performer. And I am very glad you have been mindful of the religious character of your choir. I trust, too, we shall find a gratifying improvement in the singing. I confess that I have long been chagrined at the dull, lifeless, unmusical performances at the Church, and heartily welcome the day of reform. There was no good

reason for the former state of things, either, for there have always been many fine voices in the congregation. I remember once a preacher served us on this wise. When he arose after the second hymn, instead of taking his text as we expected, he said, 'Brethren, half a minister's inspiration comes from his audience, at least in the present day. I am not very well this morning, and think I have but little preaching power. And after such singing as we have just had, I believe it impossible for me to preach at all. You might as well have thrown a wet blanket around my shoulders as to have sung the hymns in the manner you did. Now, if you will take this hymn (giving out some familiar lines), and sing it as if you mean it, I will try to preach to you, otherwise, not; for it would then be a failure, and I do not wish to make a failure.' The rebuke was well received, the congregation took the hymn, and made it ring again. He then said, 'I believe I can preach a little after that;' and, indeed, he appeared to enjoy unusual liberty.

"There is apt to be trouble, even with the best choirs; they are prone to forget that they are to *lead* the singing only, for all the congregation to join. They appropriate it all to themselves, under the notion that they are appointed to *do* the singing *for* the congregation, like the singers

at a concert. Mr. Beecher tells us that once he went to a Methodist Church, on purpose to enjoy a service with congregational singing. But he was doomed to a bitter disappointment. A little band fenced off into a corner by a high railing, manufactured the music in so complicated a form that the audience neither did, nor could, unite in it; but, as he says, meekly stood up to be sung to. And now, my boy, if he ever comes to our Church in Bingtown, you must provide him a better entertainment that that."

"Well, I think we will," said I. "It is fairly understood that, so far as possible, we will have congregational singing. But something will depend on the congregation. We can not agree to confine ourselves to Old Hundred, and the stale tunes which have always been in use. The people must learn at least a reasonable proportion of new music."

"You are certainly right, my boy. I think the Lord designed that there should be a variety of melodies in the Church, just as he has provided variety every-where else. I have always thought it a good plan for the leader of a choir, at stated times through the week, to instruct the whole congregation, that is, all who will attend. Thus, a general knowledge can be imparted, and a unison be effected to the improvement and edifica-

tion of all. I do think good singing not only adds, legitimately, to the attractiveness of divine service, but also increases the efficiency of all branches of devotional exercises. There is a wonderful power in music to soothe and tranquilize the wearied heart, and to control the sentiments of the life. Some one has said, 'Let me make the songs of a nation, and I care not who makes the laws.' There is force in this remark, also. It is declared that the French people can always be stirred almost to frenzy by the Marseilles Hymn. And, indeed, it always excites me to hear it, even as translated into the English language, whereby it, of course, loses much of its spirit and fire.

"And, in religious worship, the soul may mount toward the throne of God with a flowing tide of song, as the lark soars to meet the morning sunlight. And we are plainly taught in the Scriptures that music will be one of the high accomplishments of the glorified saints in the heavenly world."

The organ served out its probation very modestly, and was, by the unanimous vote of all present, at a meeting called to consider the matter, received into full connection, except that the good brother who had treated it as a battery withdrew, at the commencement of the probationary period,

and connected himself with the United Brethren Church, where he is doing very well I believe. And, according to Uncle Toby's prediction, some of the most zealous original opponents would probably be among the last to consent now to a removal of the instrument.

XXXV.

ON DETRACTION AND ASPERSION.

LUCY was much troubled by a false report—of no great importance, but, nevertheless, quite annoying—started by one of the long-tongued sisterhood who, seem, like scorpions at the tropics, to be lying in wait at every corner, ready to sting every thing which comes near them.

"O," said Mattie, "do n't mind it, Lue. Just consider the source, and let it go."

"But," answered poor Lucy, "I can 't help minding it, no matter where the source is. I can 't bear to be talked about in that way."

"And you are right, my dear," said Uncle Toby. "A woman's reputation is a very precious treasure. And yet I would not unduly fret about it. It is not really in the power of the gossip-mongers to injure you materially or permanently in this city, both because you are known and because they are known. Let this comfort you.

"However, no doubt many a worthy reputation has been well-nigh ruined, in this very community, by idle gossip and thoughtless sneers, as well as by downright slander. There seems to be not only a proneness in individuals to slander others, directly and indirectly, but also a proneness in communities to adopt it, notwithstanding, in reality, every society is interested in the good name of every member thereof—just as, for example, a family is. Yet, so marked is this wretched tendency—which I do not think has ever been satisfactorily accounted for either by mental or moral philosophers—that, in the fifteenth Psalm, it is mentioned as a peculiarity of those who are entitled to abide in the tabernacle, and dwell in the holy hill, that they do not backbite with their tongues, nor do evil to their neighbor, nor take up a reproach against their neighbor; that is, do not adopt a floating rumor against their neighbor's character or reputation. And this seems, by fair deduction or implication, to exclude those who do these things—which bears very hard on a considerable number of professing Christians, who are sadly given to such practices in all assemblings or gossiping parties. Well, we can not help it. The Psalmist sharply draws the line, and levels at them his sweeping denunciation—

so that they can only avoid the censure by squarely getting out of the way of it. This is all the advice I have for them.

"Properly speaking, slander consists of two branches—namely, detraction, which means a taking away; and aspersion, which is the opposite—the first negative, the second positive. I am unable to say which is the worse; but usually they go hand in hand. One of the most provoking forms of the first is what may appropriately be termed blank slander, which does its work by insinuation merely, without affirming any thing. Owing to its indefinite character, it is almost impossible to guard against it, or counteract it in any way. For example, a good quality of some absent person is referred to; but the remark is terminated by an ominous 'but —,' with a knowing look, as if there were something awful behind that little conjunction which the speaker could disclose if so minded, but withholds from pure magnanimity. The trait of benevolence may come up: 'Yes, he is quite ready to give, but —,' Now, here the dash stands for whatever the fancy of the hearers can conceive, 'gorgons and hydras and chimeras dire,' display, fraud, oppression, robbery, or hypocrisy—any thing can be supplied. A plump falsehood is vastly preferable to fight against, because it has

something tangible in it. Such insinuations are always meaner than lies, and never so easy to answer or subdue.

"Another form is slandering one by telling the truth about him; and you know the old adage of the English law was, 'The greater the truth, the greater the slander.' I do not mean that this was part of the law; but it was among legal maxims. And although you smile at the quaint idea, yet I undertake to say its correctness can be clearly shown. The slander herein consists of specifying what may be real and perhaps glaring defects, considered out of their connection with modifying, counteracting, or restraining qualities of the character. And, of course, the more gross the defect, the more ugly it appears standing out alone. Suppose it were possible to take a photograph of a person, copying exactly as far as it goes, but leaving out the nose, or one of the eyes. He would hardly accept it as a true likeness; and still less if the picture showed nothing at all but his physical deficiencies. And yet this is precisely the moral likeness many good sort of persons are continually making up for their neighbors. And they seem to think they have done ample justice to the subjects of their pictures, merely because what they do exhibit contains nothing but the

truth, cheerfully admitting, when required, that it is not the whole truth.

"There are persons who seem to have a peculiarly sharp discernment in spying out flaws of character; while, on the other hand, Christian charity 'thinketh no evil,' and discerns rather the qualities which make up the man, but to which, as it appears, the persons referred to are hopelessly blind. Now, if we take it in hand to doctor up the minor defects of our friends and neighbors, we will assuredly have no time for any thing else. And, moreover, I am disposed to think one who feels impelled to the undertaking had better begin first at home; and if he ever gets beyond that, having perfected the work there, he can laudably commence to improve others. You know this is the Scripture rule: 'Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye, and behold a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite; first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.'

"But, in truth, it is no such motive which actuates the lovers of gossip. They have no desire whatever to cure their neighbors at all,

but only to feed on their failings, just as some animals feed on garbage. And truly there is here a very extended pasture-field for all whose tastes lead them into it. Its produce is unfailing, not being affected by drought or flood; but then it is always extremely unhealthy, and, indeed, death-dealing to the souls of the feeders.

"Now, I do not insist that no notice shall be taken of men's defects, especially if they are of a dangerous character. Society has a right to brand and shun evil men. And the reputation such men acquire is a just punishment for their deeds. Especially, a liar or gossip ought to be known and recognized as a liar or gossip. While the Gospel condemns evil speaking, it nowhere requires us to confound all distinctions between men as to their deservings. St. Paul wrote to Timothy against Alexander, the coppersmith; and St. John wrote to the Church against Diotrephes, and even uttered a threat in the letter. The Savior himself said to the Pharisees, in reference to Herod, 'Go ye and tell that fox.' To pay no attention to the demerits of men would be to sink the just reputation of the worthy to a level with that of the undeserving. It is chiefly by contrast that we determine the relative value of things and of character. But gossip-mongers are not the proper persons to judge of reputations

or of persons, being prone to a distorted estimate from their moral obliquity of vision. As to defects which are not dangerous to the interests of community, although they may properly enough be observed, they had far better be passed over in silence as the private concern of the individual himself.

"So much, then, for detraction. But what words can suffice to express a due detestation of that other branch of slander, aspersion? It is piracy in the extreme. And yet how widely has it prevailed, so that no one seems to be secure! It is apparently almost as dangerous to go out into community as it used to be in former years to sail along the coasts of Tunis and Algiers. Position is no defense, and purity no shield, from the roaring monster going about 'seeking whom he may devour.' Sometimes aspersive slander issues forth from envy. Of this we have a good illustration in ancient history. Aristides, an Athenian judge, was renowned for his love of equity, insomuch that he acquired the surname of The Just. But he fell into disrepute, as all good men were liable to do in those days, as well as in the present, and it was proposed to banish him by the ostracism, or vote by shells. Passing along by the market-place on the day the vote was cast, he was accosted by a countryman

ignorant of his person, who requested him to write a name on a shell, being himself unable to write. 'Whose name shall I write?' 'Why, the name of Aristides.' 'What harm has Aristides done you?' 'O, no harm; but I can't bear to hear him always called The Just.' He took the shell, wrote his own name upon it, and immediately went into voluntary banishment.

"It was formerly the law in England—perhaps it is now—that one convicted of perjury in a criminal prosecution should be punished with the same penalty to which the prisoner was liable if sentenced. It was a just regulation, I think; and society at large ought to treat slanderers in the same manner. We have a greater authority than even that great master of the knowledge of human nature, Shakespeare, for the assertion that one who steals away a reputation is worse than one who merely steals property. I refer to King Solomon, who said, 'A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold.' Indeed, often, reputation—or what we term credit—is the basis of wealth. It is said that a certain Quaker once promised an apprentice, on condition of his faithfulness, to give him something at the expiration of his indentures worth more than one thousand dollars. The time came, the boy was about to depart, and

the Quaker turned to the father, saying, 'Thy son is the best boy I ever had about my establishment.' This was gratifying; but where was the present? Had he forgotten that? The Quaker, observing his look of disappointment, told him that the promise was in part fulfilled, and assured him that he would find it so. Of course the boy was dissatisfied for a time; but when he entered on business for himself he was not long in finding out that the Quaker's good word in the community was doing more for him than a cash capital of many thousands would have done, and the final result was eminently satisfactory. There can be no doubt that many a worthy business man has been left hopelessly stranded in consequence of false rumors injurious to his credit.

"If all lovers of honor and justice would adopt a plan pursued by the wife of a certain English clergyman, gossip and slander would speedily come to an end, in respectable circles at least. Whenever she heard what seemed to be an unjust detraction or imputation concerning an absent person, she would, at the first opportunity, go to the one traduced, relate what had been told, give the name of the informant, and ask if it were true. It is almost needless to say that she soon put gossip to flight wherever

she came. Yet, I believe, she remained popular with the fair-minded, her motives being understood and approved by the good sense of the community.

"One effectual antidote of the evil is for all to cultivate the gift of conversing on things rather than persons. No doubt a considerable proportion of that which is really slanderous is unintentionally so. We must have something to talk about in our social intercourse; and, in default of better themes, we discuss our neighbors. They who can converse fluently on this topic could, with a little pains, learn to do so on others; and they could gather information in other channels just as well as in this, if they would set about it in good earnest. A few vigorous, influential examples of this kind would go far toward correcting the abominable evil of slander; and certainly such conversation would be vastly more edifying and entertaining to all parties than that which now prevails."

"But," said I, "you can't make a philosophical society, nor a reading society, out of every knot of women who may chance to come together."

"It is not necessary to do so. Let the conversation be, if desired, what we call small talk; but let it be drawn from things, and not persons.

And in sewing-circles and such like, I see no reason why there should not be a regular reader appointed to provide interesting books to read aloud at every meeting. After a trial, I believe all would be delighted with it.

"I do not know but that it is a great defect in the American people that they must talk everlastingly. I have heard of some nation who hold it as a breach of decorum for any one to speak in company unless he has something to say worth hearing. But we must rattle away all the time, sense or nonsense. If we have nothing to talk about, at least we can gabble; and thus, materials being in demand, we run into our neighbors' affairs before we fairly know what we are about."

We all laughed heartily at this vigorous thrust, Lucy appearing to have forgotten her especial grievance in the interest she felt in the discourse.

He proceeded:

"Above all, we should secure the infallible guard of a loving, sympathetic heart, going out in good will to all mankind. The more earnest and active our Christian charity is, the less inclined will we be to make our neighbors the subjects of unfriendly or thoughtless criticism, and the more our example in this respect will

restrain those with whom we mingle from indulging this miserable pastime.

"Meanwhile, when we are traduced ourselves we must bear it meekly; and yet, if the matter is important, and will justify the trouble, we may properly take pains to clear ourselves. But we have no time to chase down all the petty censures flung out against us; for, in this, we might waste almost the whole of life. I remember once reading an instructive fable on this point. Two men set out on the same journey—the one ten days in advance of the other. The later traveler overtook the former on the road, and, surprised, asked him the reason of his slow progress. 'O,' he replied, 'there were so many little dogs running out after me along the road, and I had to drive them back.' The other rejoined: 'The same dogs came out after me; but I disregarded them, and so they did not harm me. You see what time you have spent to no profit.'

"And now, my dear," he continued, addressing Lucy, "this matter of yours, I think, will not justify you in troubling yourself particularly about it, although I know it is annoying. It will, if let alone, vanish soon, like a fog of the morning. And you will find it a good thing to follow your Savior's advice, and 'pray for them

that despitefully use you.' And now, my dears, good-night"—and he went up to his room.

I do not know whether Lucy prayed for her tormentor, in accordance with Uncle Toby's recommendation, or not. Next morning, however, she had fully recovered her usual cheerfulness, and I never afterward heard any allusion to the occurrence.

XXXVI.

ON SYMPATHY.

MOLLY had a very pleasant playmate, about her own age, who, not long since, spent an afternoon with her. Just at tea-time, an accident happened by which one of Molly's fingers was bruised; not very seriously, but yet so as to give considerable pain. Susie put her arm around Molly's neck, talked soothingly to her, and kissed the wounded member. A very short course of this treatment sufficed to set things going on swimmingly again, Molly even refusing to have the finger "tied up." Uncle Toby smiled at the result; and when the little girls had gone out to resume their interrupted play, he said:

"Well do I remember how my mother used to 'kiss the place to make it well' whenever I was hurt in my plays; and how it acted like a charm upon me. The power of genuine sympathy is, indeed, marvelous. It was doubtless

implanted in our nature, partly, to move us to the relief of our fellows in distress. And he who can pass by suffering and want with an unpitying heart has lost one of the noblest impulses of true manhood. Even where sympathy can not relieve, it soothes. It divides sorrow and doubles joy, and here is the basis of that precept of Scripture: 'Rejoice with those that do rejoice; and weep with those that weep.' If we take pleasure in the joy of others, it yields us the same happiness they possess. If we have a sympathetic grief, we have the assurance that thereby we can assuage human woe. And there is something sublimely pathetic in the declaration of the prophet, concerning the Lord and his people Israel: 'In all their afflictions, he was afflicted.' And how has it consoled many an aching heart to consider that now, 'We have not a High Priest who can not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was, in all points, tempted like as we are, yet without sin.'

"In one of the loftiest passages of the Old Testament is the highest recognition of the Savior's desire for sympathy, and his destitution of it in the hour of extremity. The passage is in the sixty-third chapter of Isaiah's prophecy: 'Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is

glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save? Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.'

"Says St. Peter, 'Be pitiful, be courteous.' And again it is said: 'Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them that suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.' The spirit of the latter precept is, Make the cause of others your own. And how forcibly this teaches us that we are to regard all as partaking of a common humanity.

"Very often sympathy is more than relief; that is, the earnest soothing pity of one who is unable to extricate us from our cause of sorrow and our embarrassments yields us more inward consolation than relief actually afforded in a blunt, reproachful, or even indifferent manner. And we should always bear this in mind when we contribute to those in want, and let them see that the outward deed is but the appropriate expression of a sympathetic heart.

"How touching was the ancient form of Oriental benediction, 'May you die among your kindred!' Any one who has experienced a dangerous sickness in the midst of strangers will forcibly realize the depth of its meaning.

"Sympathy, however, must not be obtrusive. There are sorrows into which no human being can enter, and in which, as Solomon mournfully says, 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness.' We must not advance into this consecrated precinct; but may merely show by our general bearing that we are always ready to yield any comfort which may lie within our power.

"Occasionally, sympathy must be suppressed in order to set an example of firmness, and to avoid disqualification for applying the remedy to the evil; as, for instance, in the practice of a surgeon.

"Sympathy is spoiled, too, if it appear merely professional. I have somewhere met a story which I think was to this effect: A lady deeply afflicted by the recent loss of a child was visited by a minister, who sought to assuage her sorrow by quoting the usual Scripture consolations. She politely but firmly rejected his aid, in the pointed inquiry, 'Have you ever lost a child?' 'I have not,' he replied. 'Then,' said she, 'you know nothing at all about it.' But even before his

departure she was greatly relieved by a mother coming in who had lately been called to endure a similar loss, and who, without uttering a word, put her arm about her waist, and wept with her in silent grief.

"To me it is highly gratifying to witness, even among the inferior creatures, the evidences of a deep and intimate sympathy. Some time since, a touching incident occurred at Wheeling, West Virginia, in the presence of perhaps fifty people. A blind horse had got into the Ohio River, and was beyond its depth, vainly trying to swim to the shore, as it had lost all idea of the proper direction. Another horse was uneasily pacing up and down along the stream, and neighing frequently, with the evident design of calling and directing its friend in the river, which was in imminent danger of drowning. At length, the horse on the land pushed into the current, swam to the other, and guided it safely to the bank, amid the rapturous applause of the excited crowd."

"Well," said I, "that very plainly squints toward Darwinism, does it not? A horse exercising the Christian virtue of sympathy, in this way, needs explanation."

He smiled, and replied, "I can see no Darwinism in it; although I am aware such facts

are drafted into that sort of service, sometimes. It does not logically follow that if I show sympathy to my kind, and a horse shows sympathy to its kind, I am therefore derived from the horse, or the horse developed from me, or my race. Possibly it might be a just conclusion that both have the same original source of being—that is, both have the same Creator. The phenomenon comes decidedly nearer establishing the theory of Mr. Wesley and Dr. Clarke, in regard to the immortality of the brute creation, than yielding any support whatever to the ingenious but gratuitous assumptions of Darwin in regard to the origin of the human race.

"There is a class of gossiping sympathizers, who are sure to be on hand at every opportunity; but whose presence would every-where be gladly dispensed with. They always hurt much more than they benefit. They remind one continually of the fable of a man who knocked the breath out of his friend in killing a wasp on his back.

"On the other hand, there is a class of sufferers who repel all sympathy by their constant whining and seeking after it. They seem to take a kind of melancholy pleasure in running over the catalogue of their ailments and woes, to any one who has the patience to listen. We

can not pity them any more than we can pity professional beggars, known to be such; notwithstanding their afflictions may be real, and distressing. Sympathy is not to be summoned. It must be spontaneous. If the view of grief does not awaken it, it will slumber on, regardless of formal demands upon it."

"But, Uncle Toby," said I, "if we are to go through the world mixing up with the sorrows of all we see, it appears to me this will be a vale of tears indeed. We shall have to lead the life of the ancient weeping philosopher, and have tears always rolling down our cheeks."

"Ah, my boy," replied he, laughing, "you lawyers seem to be much given to distorting and exaggerating. The matter is by no means so bad as that comes to. It is not ordained that any one man shall be loaded down with the whole sum of the world's miseries. Every one in his own limited sphere. You have only to look around you, within the compass of your own circle of life, to see how many occasions there are, among earth's sorrows, to indulge the brighter feeling of sympathy, in rejoicing with those that do rejoice. And yet we will have opportunities enough to 'weep with them that weep,' to sober us, and prevent undue laxity of character or behavior."

"But how about those who are suffering as the result of their evil deeds?" I inquired.

"We ought not to withhold pity from them," he replied; "but, of course, our sympathy can not be so tender and intimate as that we feel toward innocent sufferers. But, as we have opportunity, we may use their sufferings as a means of reformation. Some stand off in such cases, and say, 'It is good enough for them,' and thus excuse themselves from duty. Such is not the Christian way, and thus the Savior does not treat our race of sinners."

Saying this, he rose from the table, and went into the garden to pluck some flowers. Here he met the little girls, who had altogether forgotten the circumstance which produced the above discourse, which so deeply interested and, I trust, profited us all.

XXXVII.

ON PREJUDICE.

I ONCE spent two full hours in trying to lodge a single idea within the cranium of one of my clients; but all in vain. It could not have been done even with the aid of a surgeon, and I went home reflecting upon the matter in connection with the well-known couplet,

> "If you convince a man against his will,
> He will be of the same opinion still."

Uncle Toby was much amused with my description of the adventure, and the meagre result, and remarked:

"The world is very largely governed by prejudice, that is, notions adopted without due examination or evidence. It is, perhaps, impossible that it should be otherwise in the present order of things. For there are comparatively few who are discriminating enough to examine into the credibility of any opinion, and these must, of

necessity, take their beliefs mainly on an implicit credence. There are fewer still who have the leisure to investigate every thing. The world is moving, and we must keep pace, and so are compelled to take up ideas at second hand, and get hold of many which have no proper foundation at all. These constitute our prejudices. And perhaps all that ought to be required of us in this regard is, that we hold ourselves always in readiness to surrender them on adverse evidence, which, however, the masses of mankind are seldom willing to do.

"There are many prejudices of a grotesque nature, which, being held to tenaciously, seem to those who entertain them to be absolutely incontrovertible, although appearing ludicrous to those who are free from them. Thus certain nations are very jealous of white men passing through their country, lest they should stop the scanty supply of rain. Mr. Palmer, in traveling through Arabia, met with a woman who abused him roundly for causing a recent severe drought, and pointing to her goats which were almost starved, asked him if he were not ashamed of himself for inflicting such unprovoked injury upon her. Very little better, I think, are the notions of those among us who always must plant in the light or dark of the moon, and indeed extend the fancy

to almost every thing they do. It is strange that even some intelligent men can not possibly be convinced that this is nothing but a delusion. I once set out a large garden with every plant in the wrong time in the moon, except one kind. A good and sensible old friend assured me that I would repent it; but I never had occasion to do so, as the garden proved a fine success in almost every particular.

"Our missionaries tell us that among the most formidable difficulties they have to overcome are those arising from the prejudices of caste, and such like. And in a matter of this kind, the more absurd the prejudice is, the more impregnable it appears to be. Our own prejudice of race and color has, until lately, presented very remarkable phases, which, however, are now rapidly disappearing. It was regarded as little better than contagion itself to eat at the same table with a colored man, however decent and cleanly he might be, or even to ride in the same street car; whereas the same persons who felt so did not scruple to hire a negro coachman, and ride with him in that capacity! And nothing but sheer prejudice ever could have attached any weight to the argument, that because negroes are of an inferior race, which is itself a mere assumption, they ought to be enslaved, and that they

are inferior, because of certain physical peculiarities ; which splendid proofs even learned Doctors of Divinity did not scruple to use, and associate with others equally relevant, to exhibit American Slavery in the light of a 'patriarchal institution.' But that has gone by, and I hope forever.

"One of the most remarkable illustrations of the power of prejudice to shut out evidence completely, is afforded by the Jewish rejection of the world's Redeemer, at the very period when they were anxiously awaiting the Messiah's coming. When he came, they would not receive him, because he came not according to their preconceived notions. They wanted no lowly, unpretending prince, but one who should appear in the glitter of royalty, as a mighty conqueror, to break the Roman yoke, and clothe the nation with a dazzling splendor in the view of the whole world. Even the good Nathaniel, when he heard that Jesus was from Nazareth, doubtingly inquired, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' However, he was willing to suspend his prejudice against that city, and go to see for himself, by which means he was convinced.

"But how the Pharisees could possibly resist such astounding miracles wrought in their presence, and that, too, at the time of their eager expectation, is one of the mysteries of evil which

we may in vain attempt to fathom. 'Their eyes they have closed,' is the expressive image employed to describe their mad opposition to the clearest evidence. He healed demoniacs before them. 'He casteth out devils,' they exclaimed with furious rage, 'through the prince of the devils.' With a word, he healed a withered arm in the Synagogue, and, with the most fiendish hate, they seek to destroy him. He called Lazarus from the grave, and they respond by trying to slay Lazarus also to prevent the people from believing. And so they went on from one miserable subterfuge to another, until they sealed the doom of their nation by putting him to death. And to this day, the Jews are closed up in the same invincible and fatal prejudice.

"But what shall we say of the twelve, who were intimately associated with him during the whole course of his ministry, enjoying the benefit of all his instructions, witnessing his miracles, and confessing his claims? When he finally told them of the necessity of his death and resurrection, they could not understand him, and at the crucifixion gave up all for lost. 'But we trusted,' said they, 'that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.' In common with their nation, they had adopted the prejudice of a conquering Messiah with a temporal kingdom; and,

referring every thing to this false standard, were bewildered and confused with the final result.

"All prominent improvements in art, science, politics, and morals, have at first, to make their way against inveterate prejudices. When Galileo made his important discoveries in astronomy, prejudice refused to listen to his proofs; but, closing its eyes and ears, made the welkin ring with the cry of 'heresy,' and punished the reckless explorer of space by forcing him to a retraction under the dread of a wretched prison or a violent death. When the first steamboat pushed out into the Atlantic, the sailors on certain vessels coming into port, were seized with terror, supposing Satan, in *propria persona*, to be on board. When geology began to take shape, it came into sharp conflict with the views generally entertained concerning the first chapter of Genesis. But now, there is no trouble here. And so proceeds the march of progress.

"At present, a Mr. Rask has suddenly assailed our belief, or prejudice, if it be such, in the longevity of the patriarchs. He has, theoretically, brought down the age of Methuselah from nine hundred and sixty-nine years to the moderate limitation of about eighty years, and the rest in proportion. He may possibly prove his points, and if he does, we must hold our-

selves in readiness to accept his proofs, and surrender our notions if needful. Still, in a matter of this kind, we may fairly require time to consider. The ground on which he goes is that, anciently, men reckoned, not by years, but months, and that the Hebrew word, translated years in Genesis, means only *a recurring period*, being therefore, very indefinite, and not specifying the duration. Gradually the time of reckoning was increased to two months, and then to six, until, finally, before the age of Moses, a full year became the unit, but how this lengthening occurred, he does not seem to explain satisfactorily.

"Such is his scheme. But it has some earmarks, which may well cause us to hesitate, and suspect, at least, the exactness of our theorist. For example, he starts out on the assumption that it is physically impossible for man to live hundreds of years. But he fails to inform us how he knows any thing about the physiological possibilities of the patriarchs, or how he knows that food, climate, and other influences, have not, since their day, changed the bearings of physiology, or how he accounts for the fact that Mr. Parr's physiology carried him, as lately as the last century, through one hundred and fifty years. Certain it is, that man's physiology was at first immortal, for so the Scriptures teach very

plainly. And how can Mr. Rask estimate the progress of degeneration under the effects of the Fall of man?

"Again, he tacitly denies the translation of Enoch by speaking of his death, although distinct mention is made in the New Testament that Enoch did not see death.

"Again, he tries to correct the Hebrew version of Genesis by the Samaritan, the Septuagint, and Josephus, which is similar to correcting the Greek New Testament by the English translation, since the books he quotes are not independent, but strictly derivative.

"Further, he does not explain the fact that Moses, in whose time he acknowledges years were estimated as annual periods, and who himself lived one hundred and twenty years, without any abatement of his natural force, should so write the Book of Genesis as necessarily to mislead his readers into the belief that the years, or term translated years, in the lives of the patriarchs, were the same periods to which the term was applied when he wrote. It would seem that a writer, composing a book for the instruction of a nation, would be careful to guard his language, and state facts so as to be understood, and, especially, if inspired, as we claim that Moses was.

"Also, according to the scheme we are consid-

ering, Enoch was only six years old when his son Methuselah was born, unless he can make out an error of some of the Hebrew transcribers. And there is a number of instances of a similar character.

"But, if the new theory is true, and can be established by proper evidence, we must, after due examination, receive it. And a way will be found, no doubt, to reconcile all the important difficulties in connection with it; although, in that case, it will be necessary to shorten up the world's chronology; and, indeed, to remodel the whole system very materially. But if it must be done, so let it be; only we are at liberty to wait, in suspense, to see what comes of Mr. Rask's investigations, and surrender only when fairly defeated."

XXXVIII.

ON STRIKES.

"FORTY thousand workmen on a strike in the city of New York!" exclaimed Uncle Toby, while looking over the morning papers. "This is terrible! What are we coming to?" Then pausing, laying his spectacles by the side of his plate, and toying, as usual, with his cup and spoon, he resumed; "I would like to see this problem of labor and capital fairly solved, and their true relations fairly adjusted. I frankly confess that I do not understand it, and I know not any one who does. Even the Labor Reform party seem to be, in many particulars, groping in the dark, having but a vague idea of what they really want. They put out, with much ostentation, what appear to be simply Utopian schemes, under the name of political principles. They disclaim Socialism; and yet without it I do not see how they can ever effect some of their professed objects. And

I have observed, furthermore, that some of the most zealous among these reformers fail to set a practical example of the workings of their political creed; but, when they are employers, pursue precisely the same course with their laborers that other employers do.

"But, one thing we may safely say, whatever the necessities really are, or the aims sought to be accomplished, these strikes have no good effect upon the interests of the workmen; but the contrary. They are not adapted to the end; because they necessarily arouse determined antagonism, like a state of war, while the real object to be attained is harmony between labor and capital. In these violent collisions, the capitalists must have the advantage, for they can live with the means already acquired, even if they have to close business, while the workmen can not live at all without employment. And so not only do these strikes inflict terrible suffering and want on the strikers and their families in the present, but they usually end in failure, most of the workmen returning under compulsion to their places, on the old terms, or some unimportant modification of them; having suffered the loss of their time, and probably contracted debts to torment them for months and years to come. I know there is a show of supporting those who are on a strike,

but this can amount to little. If they can have a surplus for this purpose, their distresses are not so great as they pretend, and so there is no occasion for striking at all.

"Besides, these matters seem to be in the hands of unscrupulous men, who do not hesitate, in this unlawful way, to invade personal liberty, and deter men who desire to work from doing so, by means of threats and even violence.

"Now what is wanted is a careful, patient accumulation of facts and statistics to show what is really necessary. Thus proper legislation may be secured, and I believe that most employers are fair-minded men, who would voluntarily yield what is sought of them by force, if only the needful information were afforded them. And this could be done with much less trouble and cost than attend these strikes, which, after all, effect nothing. If eight hours work ought to constitute a day, rather than ten hours; or, if the co-operative plan is the proper one, let the necessity of the change be plainly made manifest. Spread the light, clearly reveal the evil, with its appropriate remedy, and I believe it will not be difficult to reform the whole matter.

"True, men are selfish; but, generally, even self-interest itself dictates a compliance with what is fair and just. Slavery was an exception, for prej-

udice still upheld it, even when demonstrated to retard material progress. But the present questions of labor are more individual and less national. There are no laws directed purposely against the laboring man as there were against the slaves. They are not a proscribed class, but have the suffrage, and are recognized as possessed of equal personal and political rights with their employers. All history shows that men will do socially what they will not do individually."

XXXIX.

ON THE TEMPERANCE CAUSE.

THE papers, one morning, contained the particulars of an interview between the mayor of Chicago and a committee of citizens appointed to communicate with him in regard to the closing of the saloons in the city on the Sabbath. The mayor had previously issued a proclamation to enforce an ordinance providing for such closing, but apparently without avail. To the astonishment of the citizens' committee, the mayor put in a pitiful plea of inability to execute the ordinance or carry the proclamation into effect, assigning as the reason that there was so large a foreign population in the city that saloons could not be open for six days in the week and then closed on the seventh, and that he had too small a police force. After reading the account, Uncle Toby said:

"There is considerable plausibility in what the mayor stated. But, as the committee justly

replied, he had the power of the people to draw upon, and even the militia of the State, if the laws were really overpowered; and so was not excusable until he had in vain exhausted all available means. But if the saloon-keepers can keep a large city in awe, setting at defiance the moral sentiment of the community, and disregarding the injunctions of the municipal authorities at pleasure, the position has indeed become serious and alarming. But I suppose the mayor's timidity conjured up unreal dangers, or else that he hesitated in view of election times. Indeed, he said to the committee that, if he should enforce the prohibitory ordinances, he would certainly be succeeded by some one who would make matters still worse—although it is hard to perceive what could be worse in this particular than entire and avowed surrender to the law-breakers.

"And yet, I think, the mayor's speech to the committee has sufficient force in it to suggest certain wholesome reflections on the subject. It may be well to consider whether we have not come to rely too much upon various kinds and degrees of prohibitory regulations, regarding these as the true goal of our wishes, and have not accordingly relaxed, in a measure, our exertions to instruct and stir into vigorous exercise

the moral sentiments of the people in every community. It seems to me that now, when there is as much need as ever to agitate the subject on moral grounds, we have fewer meetings and fewer public addresses than formerly. Our forces have apparently retreated, even, from the open field into the ambush of secret organizations, with a kind of political outcropping from time to time. And we now seldom hear the subject referred to in the pulpit.

"Now, unless we are careful to advance no faster than the popular sentiment will sustain us in the enactments we may secure, we shall not only lose our labor by the premature legislation becoming a dead-letter on the statute-book, as hitherto has generally been the case, but even retard our progress very seriously by abortive and consequently discouraging attempts. No actual repulse ever leaves things as they were before the effort was made. We know it is quite possible to obtain hasty legislation on almost any thing, by means of the persistent energy of a few active workers; but what avails it if the law can not be enforced? Legislation, in truth, can never effect any reform. To be efficient, it must be merely the outward sign and culmination of a virtual reform already existing in the morals and sentiments of a majority of the

community, and so only a measure to restrain a reckless minority. It would be vain to pass a law against stealing horses, if community were mainly made up of horse-thieves and their sympathizers. Legislation, then, has no value except what is conferred upon it by the sentiment of the people; and law is powerless without a general disposition to execute its provisions. And this affords us an explanation of the forced abandonment of so much temperance legislation. It was in advance of the moral power of the temperance reform.

"And as to temperance parties in politics, I doubt whether they can ever become a permanent feature in our national affairs, although occasionally they may hold a balance of power in a single election or two, under the local State governments. And the reason is that, of necessity, such a reform as temperance rests too much on purely moral grounds, and has too little of mere politics in it. And so there will always be enough of political interests, necessities, and issues to overshadow the political bearings of a moral question.

"The true course is, to instruct the people in their personal duties and obligations on this question, and then secure effectual legislation as fast as we can make it work, acting, meanwhile,

on the local issues of license or no license, as opportunity occurs. At present, the most energetic legislation attainable is, I think, a local-option law; which leaves the matter, where it appropriately belongs, in the power of every community to decide, subject to its own responsibility.

"It is, indeed, sometimes disheartening to reflect upon how much effort has been put forth, and how much yet remains to be done in order to free the country from the terrible evil of drunkenness. The tenacity with which it holds its ground in human forbearance, notwithstanding its fearfully destructive consequences visible every-where, is one of the strangest and most unaccountable phenomena of human depravity. One would suppose that the misery, ruin, and death constantly attending upon it would soon deter the most daring devotee of vice. And yet we behold men who might be respectable, honorable, and prosperous, bringing themselves and their families, once so tenderly loved and fostered, down, down, into the lowest depths of want and ignominy; and still persisting in the awful infatuation until every hope departs, and the drifting gloom of endless night has settled around them without remedy. In a pamphlet published many years ago, in England, entitled,

'The Confessions of a Drunkard,' and supposed to have been written by the celebrated Charles Lamb, is a passage which has always deeply interested me since I first met it as quoted in Upham's 'Mental Philosophy;' for it shows, in the most vivid coloring, the helpless situation of the hapless slaves of strong drink. It is as follows: 'Of my condition, there is no hope that it should ever change; the waters have gone over me. But out of the black depths, could I be heard, I would cry out to all those who have but set a foot in the perilous flood. Could the youth, to whom the flavor of his first wine is delicious as the opening scenes of life, or the entering upon some newly discovered paradise, look into my desolation, and be made to understand what a dreary thing it is when a man shall feel himself going down a precipice with open eyes and a passive will; to see his destruction, and have no power to stop it, and yet to feel it all the way emanating from himself; to perceive all goodness emptied out of him, and yet not be able to forget a time when it was otherwise; to bear about the piteous spectacle of his own self-ruin; could he see my fevered eye, feverish with last night's drinking, and feverishly looking for this night's repetition of the folly; could he feel the body of the death

out of which I cry hourly, with feebler and feebler outcry, to be delivered,—it were enough to make him dash the sparkling beverage to the earth, in all the pride of its mantling temptation.'

"And we find swarms of fiends in human shape lying in wait to take advantage of the horrible condition of these pitiable victims for the sake of gain. They do not hesitate to reduce these men, with their innocent wives and children, to the utmost destitution and wretchedness; and when the ruin is fully wrought these infamous traffickers in human blood stand off, with arms complacently folded, shaking their heads and saying, 'Thou canst not say I did it.' No, no; it was the drunkard's fault. 'He ought to have been more of a man than thus to make a brute of himself. Poor fellow! he was his own worst enemy.' And so the tempter excuses his murderous deed, and goes on, under the sanction of community, to prosecute his wicked business.

"Another remarkable feature connected with the prevalence of intemperance in the use of ardent spirits is, that it is not confined to any particular age or country. In ancient times and modern, among civilized and uncivilized, and in all climates, the evil is almost every-where found in all its baneful energy. The exceptions are few.

This fact strongly indicates that the cause is coextensive with the human race. And, as yet, psychologists have furnished no satisfactory explanation that I have seen.

"But Rev. Frederick W. Robertson advanced a theory in one of his published sermons, which to me seems very reasonable; namely, that the origin of intoxication lies in a felt want by mankind of the spiritual elevation of feeling belonging to our original nature, but lost in the Fall, only to be restored by a reunion with God provided by the Gospel. Confirmatory of this view, we know that ardent spirits are mainly sought merely for their stimulating qualities. And we are also aware that the high-minded and generous-hearted seem more peculiarly liable to become victims than the low and sordid, or those who lead merely an animal existence. I am by no means prepared to say that this is not the true solution of the great problem.

"And it follows from this—and it seems to be in accordance with the actual fact—that the progress of the temperance reform will bear a close relation to the advancement of Christianity in its influences and experiences. And this, again, falls in with what I said a little while ago, that our main dependence for the extinction of the evil must be on the inculcation of

moral sentiment, with such legislative aid as we can make available to this end.

"A good deal has lately been said about counteracting drunkenness by encouraging the manufacture of domestic wine, which I think is as absurd as putting on kindling in order to extinguish a fire. It is urged that there is less intoxication in wine-growing countries than elsewhere; but this is directly against the testimony of many witnesses of the highest standing, to a few of whom I shall refer particularly, as this is becoming a practical question of the greatest importance.

"Charles Dickens says: 'The wine-shops are the colleges and chapels of the poor in France. History, morals, politics, jurisprudence, and literature, in iniquitous forms, are taught in these colleges and chapels, where professors of evil continually deliver those lessons, and where hymns are sung nightly to the demons of demoralization. In these haunts of the poor theft is taught as the morality of property; falsehood, as the morality of speech; and assassination, as the justice of the people. It is in the wine-shop the cabman is taught to think it heroic to shoot the middle-class man who disputes his fare. It is in the wine-shop the workman is taught to admire the man who stabs his faithless mistress.

It is in the wine-shop the doom is pronounced upon the employer who lowers the pay of the employed. The wine-shops breed, in a physical air of malaria and moral pestilence of envy and vengeance, the men of crime and revolution. Hunger is proverbially a bad counselor; but drink is worse.'

"Mr. Gough testifies: 'I had heard so much of the sobriety of wine-growing countries, and so many propositions to introduce wine in this country as a cure for drunkenness, that I determined to make what personal observations I might be able during a very brief sojourn on the Continent. On the Boulevards and the Champs Elysées, I saw no more drunkenness than on Broadway or Fifth Avenue; but, in the narrow by-streets back of the main thoroughfares, I discovered as many evidences of gross dissipation as in Baxter Street, New York, or Bedford Street, Philadelphia. I took a survey of several of the low cabarets, and found the same bloated or haggard faces, the same steaming rags, the same bleared and blood-shot eyes, the same evidence of drink-soaked humanity, in its degradation, as in any of the grog-shops of the United States. In Geneva, the same; we were kept awake by the bacchanalian revels of intoxicated men in the streets nearly all night. In

Vevay, I saw more evidences of drunkenness than in any town of its population in our country. In Mayence, a fair was held while we were there; and I saw more drunken men on the street and in the square than I believe were to be seen on the streets during the whole five days of the Peace Festival in Boston. In Basle, and in Cologne, it was the same. And my impressions are, from personal observation not very extensive, that drunkenness prevails in the wine-growing countries to as great an extent as in any portion of the United States that I have visited.'

"Mr. J. Fenimore Cooper says: 'I came to Europe under the impression that there was more drunkenness among us than in any other country—England, perhaps, excepted. A residence of six months in Paris changed my views entirely. I have taken unbelievers with me into the streets, and have never failed to convince them of their mistake in the course of an hour. . . . On one occasion, a party of four went out with this object; we passed thirteen drunken men within a walk of an hour. Many of them were so far gone as to be totally unable to walk. . . . In passing between Paris and London, I have been more struck by drunkenness in the streets of the former than in those of the latter.'"

It may be gratifying to the reader to know that the Chicago mayor, stimulated by the very encouraging visit of the citizens' committee, did soon thereafter execute the city ordinance, although yielding with rather a bad grace, and a spiteful fling at those who had stirred him up to duty. Whether the saloon-men will turn him out of office for it at the next election remains to be seen.

XL.

ON THE LOVE OF NATURE.

ABOUT half a mile to the east of Bingtown flows a very lively stream of water, skirted by some rugged bluffs and rocks, over and among which we all—Uncle Toby and my father, Mattie, Lucy, Molly, my wife, and I—spent the greater part of a beautiful October afternoon; the ladies each bearing, as we returned, a bunch of late Autumn flowers, as a trophy of the exploration, there having been no frost of consequence that season, as yet. By tea-time, these flowers were nicely arranged into a bouquet by the girls, and presented to Uncle Toby, who, as they well knew, was a passionate admirer of floral beauty. He was, of course, much gratified by their thoughtful care; and, returning his thanks, he said:

"Only a few hours ago, these flowers were modestly growing upon the steep banks, among the rocks and trees, thus associating with the

grand and majestic, giving us a pleasing view of beauty sustained by strength. And thus they are in the divine character. And one who loves the beauties of nature, should love God; for he, being the author of beauty, must contain in himself all its elements. And in this connection, we should remember that we are to resemble him by bearing his image, and are thus to 'worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.' And one who loves grandeur, should love God, whose greatness is unsearchable, and bow with awe and reverence before him.

"If one's moral perceptions are in lively exercise, every thing in nature must raise the heart to him who formed it. And it is a matter of pleasure and wonder to trace the references to nature with which the Scriptures abound, and which they always make the medium of conveying spiritual truth. The vine and the branches represent Christ and his disciples. We are taught the lesson of dependence for food and raiment by an allusion to the birds, and to the lily of the field. The Jewish nation were a vineyard, barren and unfruitful; and the mildew and hail are represented as the messengers of God to punish their defections. When awe is to be inculcated, the Psalmist proclaims, 'The strength of the hills is his also;' and again, 'The sea is

his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.' If we are incited to praise, he calls upon all creation to join us. 'Fire and hail; snow and vapor; stormy wind fulfilling his word; mountains and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars.'

"It is well for every Christian thus to associate the idea of the Creator with all natural objects. We may well give ourselves often to the gently soothing influences all around us, as, for example, the soft breezes, floral beauty, the murmur of brooks, the steady, graceful flowing of a calm river. And on this point, there is a beautiful passage in Cowper's task, which I will quote:

"'Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds
Exhilarate the spirit, and restore
The tone of languid nature. Mighty winds,
That sweep the skirt of some far-spreading wood
Of ancient growth, make music not unlike
The dash of ocean on his winding shore,
And lull the spirit while they fill the mind;
Unnumbered branches waving in the blast,
And all their leaves fast fluttering all at once.
Nor less composure waits upon the roar
Of distant floods, or on the softer voice
Of neighboring fountain, or of rills that slip
Through the cleft rock, and chiming as they fall,
Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length
In matted grass, that with a livelier green
Betrays the secret of their silent course.
Nature inanimate employs sweet sounds:

But animated nature sweeter still,
To sooth and satisfy the human ear.
Ten thousand warblers cheer the day; and one
The live-long night; nor these alone whose notes
Nice-fingered art must emulate in vain;
But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime,
In still repeated circles screaming loud,
The jay, the pie, and e'en the boding owl,
That hails the rising moon, have charms for me,
Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,
Yet, heard in scenes where peace forever reigns,
And only there, please highly for their sake.'

"And as to the grand and sublime, it tends wonderfully to expand the views of God's greatness, power, and majesty, if we ponder the vast and unlimited revelations of astronomy; or even look reflectingly upon the heaving waters of the ocean. Thus the Psalmist, when he walked out to gaze upon the star-lit and moon-lit canopy above, was so lost in a sense of Divine Omnipotence, and his own insignificance, as to exclaim, 'When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?'

"There are some persons who do not seem to relish the contemplation of the ruggedly grand scenery of the earth's surface. Not long since, I was reading a book in which the writer said a very intelligent friend of his disliked

mountains, regarding them as mere excrescences, whose only use is to furnish soil to the valleys by the disintegration of the rocks upon them. But as to myself, I have a peculiar admiration for rocks, precipices, and mountainous elevations. And I see not how any one can view the wonders of the Rocky Mountains, or the Alps, without the most indescribable emotions of sublimity. Take, for example, the Yosemite Valley, in California, with its gorges more than half a mile in perpendicular depth, and its fine waterfalls many hundreds of feet high. Or take the Mariposa Valley, with its gigantic trees ninety feet and more in circumference; or take the Rocky Mountain Geysers, etc., and the man must be indeed deficient in lofty feeling who is not almost transported with the view. But then, I met a man at Niagara Falls who ridiculed my folly in coming so far to see the cataract, declaring that, although he had lived in the immediate vicinity twenty years, he had not probably gone to look at the falls twenty times!

"But there is also an inexhaustible fund of delight in the study of natural science to an appreciative mind, as well as in natural scenery—whether animate or inanimate. But as one may look out upon the face of nature, without any especial thought or feeling, so we may study nat-

ural science as a mere routine, without any particular interest or profit. It is our business—and may be made the source of the highest gratification also—to preserve a constant sense of the spiritual relations involved in whatever department of natural science we push our investigations.

"Of course, the subject is too vast for me to offer a synopsis in the shortest form, even of a single branch of science; but I desire to recall to your thoughts a few striking facts to show how we may trace the evidences of a designing hand and providence in every direction. Let us take a very familiar instance—the freezing of water. Now it is a law of nature that any substance passing from a fluid to a solid state contracts in bulk, and becomes denser, and consequently heavier. Water follows this law down to forty degrees, eight degrees above the freezing point, where the law is completely reversed, so that, in the formation of ice, the fluid, though passing into a solid state expands, and becomes lighter, and remains at the surface for the purpose of protection. How disastrous it would be if the ice should, by increased density and weight, continually sink to the bottom, leaving the surface to freeze until the whole would be solidified in the rivers and seas, we can easily imagine.

And the disaster which would thus result from the operation of the law is provided against by reversing the law just at the point where reversal becomes needful.

"Again, take this fact: we are taught in the Lord's prayer to ask that our bread be given us day by day. And, in direct accordance with this, the grain crops are annually given, in general, in just the proper quantity for the necessities of the world. So that it has been truly remarked there has not probably ever been a year and a half's supply of grain on the earth at one time. Here, then, taught by the annual supply, we have the fact of continual dependence on present supplies for present wants.

"And, further, take these flowers, gathered this afternoon, in our refreshing jaunt. Goethe once threw out, as a poetical idea, that all plants, throughout their entire structure, are nothing but leaves. It was, as a matter of course, ridiculed at first, by the usual bigotry of science, as absurd and visionary; but yet it is now the basis of botanical science that the leaf is the type of the plant; so that the stem, the flower, the fruit, and the seed, are nothing but modifications of the leaf; just as the nails on the fingers are but modifications of the skin. For example, the apple is a leaf with the cellular tissues

expanded and filled with pulp, and so of all the rest. Also, the configuration of every individual plant is exactly conformed to the contour of every leaf on it; so that, in examining a leaf, one can tell the shape of the plant, or tree, on which it grew, just as Cuvier could construct an animal from a single bone. If, for instance, a tree has a long stem and regular branches, the leaf will have a long stem and regular veins. If short, or irregular, the leaf will vary accordingly. Here, then, is a wonderful, though simple, provision, by which every vegetable is made throughout according to a definite pattern, which fact unmistakably exhibits the hand of a skillful workman.

"The microscope reveals the most astonishing and admirable perfection and symmetry in those animals which are too small to be seen by the naked eye. And it is impossible to say which the more conclusively reveal the power and skill of the Creator—those works which are vast and illimitable, or those which are infinitely minute, and yet so exactly adapted to their sphere, and so endowed with every thing needful for life and enjoyment. It is extremely interesting to watch the graceful maneuvers of the little creatures swimming around in a drop of stagnant water, evidently well pleased with themselves, and their

situation, and well provided for, in all respects. I must not forget to purchase a microscope, and we shall have some entertaining experiments with the self-important specks of being.

"The microscope also reveals another singular fact—the regularity and smoothness of the works of nature as compared with the most exquisite works of art. Take for example, the finest cambric needle; and, in the microscope, it will appear all ragged and unfinished. But take the sting of a bee, and the shape and proportions are perfect. And even a rough thorn has a finish that may be vainly sought for in any of the works of man.

"Of course, there are few of the human family who have the leisure and ability to become intimately acquainted with any single branch of natural science. But we may attain to a sufficient knowledge of the general outlines to fill us with delight in tracing the hand of God in his works."

XLI.

ON ART.

IN the *Scientific American* of a certain date were engravings of several new labor-saving machines, of wonderful construction, and apparently well adapted to the purposes they were designed to accomplish. After a careful examination of them, Uncle Toby remarked:

"If all the labor-saving machinery in the world could be suddenly swept away, it would leave a desolate wilderness, and probably all the civilized portions of mankind would perish. Or if a laboring man among us were compelled to do without the products thereof, or submit to the inevitable privations of those who, in ancient times, were reputed immensely wealthy, and indeed were so as to money and lands, he would complain much more bitterly of his poverty than he does now. I allude to conveniences and comforts about the household. So that, while art is con-

tinually busy in supplying our wants, it does, at the same time, enlarge those very wants, and many things which are luxuries in one age become necessary in an age succeeding; for example, wheat-bread, beef, tea, coffee, and sugar. Even now, meat every day, which, to us, seems indispensable, is wholly out of the question with hundreds of thousands of the European peasants and laborers, who think they are doing well to have it once a week. I am not speaking either of the extremely poor, but of the ordinary classes of working-men.

"The inventions which every week throng our national Patent-office constitute a very long and varied list. Of course, some of them are still-born, so to speak, and are scarcely heard of after the letters are issued; but many of them become permanent and soon indispensable. And the labor-saving machinery in our country alone probably exerts a continual power superior to the combined physical force of the whole human race.

"But, not to deal in generalities merely, let us specify a little. I can well remember when public traveling was done mainly on steamboats and in crowded stages. And if, in staging, the rate of speed attained an average of six miles an hour, when we were all packed together like

herrings in a box, we were well satisfied. And if, on a boat, we did not lose more than a day in every three or four, by being in low water or stuck on a sand-bar, we deemed it a success. But if now ensconced on comfortable seats in a rail-road car, we do not 'make' twenty miles an hour, we vote it a slow coach, and lose patience. Or, if we go into the fields, where we used to plant corn exclusively by hand with the hoe, or where we used to gather grain with a sickle, we shall find the corn-planter or harvester at work, in a manner which seems to render the former modes ridiculous, or, at least, insignificant. Or, go to the barn, where we used to thrash grain with a flail, or trample it out of the straw with the feet of horses, and afterward winnow it with a sheet, or at a later period, with a fanning mill turned by hand, and now we see a steam thrashing-machine separating the wheat both from the straw and the chaff, and putting it into sacks ready for the market.

"Formerly, all business between different cities had to be done through the mail transmitted by the slow lumbering stage-coach, with the necessary delay of days and weeks, sometimes involving ruin. Now, a merchant in Chicago or San Francisco can, in a few minutes, communicate on business with a dealer in New York or Phila-

delphia, and receive an answer. Formerly, when there were bustling times in Europe, we watched with anxiety for the arrival of the European mail steamer with news two weeks old. Now, we read in the morning paper what happened in London or Paris the evening before, and, of course, complain if any thing occurs to prevent its appearing at the expected time, so that ordinary events in Europe become stale news in America before the lapse of two days from the date of their occurrence. What an immense increase of business this facility of correspondence promotes can be better imagined than computed.

"Once we had only weekly newspapers, small, and scantily filled, at that. Now, we have mammoth dailies, abounding with able editorials, literary intelligence, general news, local events, market reports, etc., amply sufficient in each issue to fill a respectable volume. And what shall we say of this 'art preservative of all other arts,' the art of printing? Consider merely its influence on business, with its oceans of handbills, circulars, and cards, every day flowing forth into community. And then the multiplicity of books and magazines, good, bad, and indifferent, with which the country is flooded; while, formerly, every book was laboriously copied with a pen to supply the very limited demand; and it required

a large estate to buy a Bible, which now can be purchased for less than a dollar, any where. The infinite expansion of mental power which printing has afforded the human family never can be estimated.

"And the bearing of all these improvements upon the progress of the Gospel is likewise immense, because they not only quicken the mind, and remove the mists of ignorance, but give increased facilities for the application of moral and religious instrumentalities.

"We perceive, then, to what an utterly inconceivable extent labor-saving machinery has enlarged the material prosperity, and the mental and moral advantages of our country and the whole civilized world. Thus the Scripture is fulfilled, 'Knowledge shall be increased, and men shall run to and fro through the earth.' And notwithstanding evil, also, as a matter of course, has availed itself of the superior facilities afforded by the progress of discovery and invention; yet the general and final results must be to advance and establish the Redeemer's kingdom among men. We know that the Gospel relies, in part, for success upon human means and co-operation. 'How shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent?' And as the power of

these human means is developed and facilitated must they become more and more effective, until Christ's proclamation is fully realized, 'Behold, I make all things new!'

"Man is endowed with the Divine image; and his power of invention and the consequent development of latent energies is plainly the image of the creative power of God. It, therefore, allies us to the Deity, and should be wholly consecrated to his service and glory.

"But the marks of human imperfection are deeply stamped upon it. If we go into a machine-shop, the groaning, shrieking, buzzing, and grinding seem to come from the very genius of confusion. But the general frame of nature has no such friction. And even the voices of creation, though at times inspiring awe and terror, are not suggestive of harshness and difficulty. There is an undertone of harmony and music in the smoothly revolving whirlwind, in the roll of the thunder, in the roar of the great cataract, in the resounding acclamations of the ocean, or the rush of the avalanche from the heights of the towering Alps. If we travel on the railroad we must hear the quivering of the car and the rattling of the wheels. But old mother earth is carrying us along at the rate of more than a thousand miles every minute, and we

neither feel the motion nor hear the whir of the speed. And thus, on comparison, shall we find it throughout the whole system of art and nature.

"No doubt God could at first have so arranged creation that there would have been no room for the exercise of human invention. But he did not so, but gave us materials and a workshop to construct for ourselves. He designed not only that man should bear his image, but imitate his acts, moral and physical. And, in part, this design is adapted to the development of human character, in the present state of things. And, for aught I know, we may go on inventing through eternity, not, of course, to supply actual necessities, but merely to exercise our faculties by which the divine glory is to be manifested forever."

"That is to me a new idea," said I.

"Well," he replied, "I do not insist upon it. I only think it probable. For my notion of heaven is not that we will sit and sing all the time, nor even, according to Mr. Whitefield's view, stand and gaze on the Savior all the time. But, as I think, heaven will consist of the full perfection and constant exercise of all the various powers which constitute human nature, freed from all embarrassment, hinderance, and suffering.

"The influence of what are termed the fine arts, music, painting, poetry, and the like, is, of necessity, refining and elevating, since they appeal directly to the fine perceptions of our nature. Take music as an example. It is related that a missionary among our Indians, I believe it was Brainerd, was once in danger of his life from the infuriated savages. But as they rushed upon him, he called into requisition his choice gift of song, and thereby soon disarmed them so effectually that they meekly came around him, asked his forgiveness, and, ever after, treated him with highest consideration. You remember the fable of Orpheus charming the beasts, and even rocks and trees, with his lyre, which was merely a poetic form of setting forth the wonderful power of music to move and excite even the most stupid of men. And also, as a matter of fact, some of the inferior animals have an exquisite ear for harmony of sounds. I have seen a horse attached to a band-wagon prancing along the street, in time to the music, as proudly as if it were an entertainment expressly provided for him.

"There is another art, peculiarly belonging to the ladies' department which, I think, may, like printing, be styled an 'art preservative of all other arts.' It is usually called the culinary art."

Here my wife and sisters interrupted the

philosopher with a ringing laugh of mirthful surprise; for they had expected him to specify drawing, or something of that sort. He smiled, and resumed:

"Napoleon ascribed the loss of one of his battles to a bad dinner. And how many battles of life have been lost through dyspepsia, caused by bad cooking and bad habits of eating, it is impossible to say. If our bread and meat are to be transformed into thought and feeling, as the physiologists put it, it becomes a matter of great importance that they be well prepared in the hands of the cook for the spiritualizing process. And it is strange that so little care and study should be given to this art, which involves the most vital chemical changes intimately connected with health and long life. How often the whole matter is left in the hands of incompetent servants, who know almost as little about boiling a potato properly as about curing a fever. I have known families who actually knew nothing about what good bread is, never at home having enjoyed even a sight of it. We have excellent artists here, in this department, but not all families are so fortunate."

The ladies blushed to order at this compliment, but were justly proud of it, nevertheless.

"The visit of Professor Blot to this country

will, I hope, effect a good result in the cities. But his instructions have not reached the rural districts, where they are likewise badly needed. I see there are some approaches made to cooking by machinery, which, perhaps may be a success, at length. And, if so, I trust an appendage of the kind will be attached to every cooking-stove in the land.

"So much for the earthly aspects of art. But there is one art which comes near to affording us a connection with the spirit world. It is said that anciently the Egyptians thought it requisite to keep in their houses the embalmed bodies of their relatives, that the families might not be separated, as the spirit was supposed to hover about its deserted tenement. We have something of the same, but more rational, under the light of Christianity. That is, the preserving of the exact likenesses of our departed ones, taken in life by the photograph and similar processes. This art is a most wonderful and gratifying acquirement. Often, when our friends are gone, their portraits thus obtained seem even to perpetuate their wonted smile, and appear almost ready to call us by name. There are now thousands of such mementos which no amount of money could buy from the holders. And it is a source of pleasure that the making of such is now

so cheap as to bring it within the reach of almost the poorest persons."

Here he abruptly ceased, and seemed lost in contemplation. Well we knew that his mind was absorbed in the memory of departed ones, and we dared not speak to him. Soon he arose, and merely uttering the customary "Good-night," retired in silence to his room.

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